

Mexican Life

Mexico's Monthly Review

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No. 6, Vol. XXVI



Oil

By Irma Diaz



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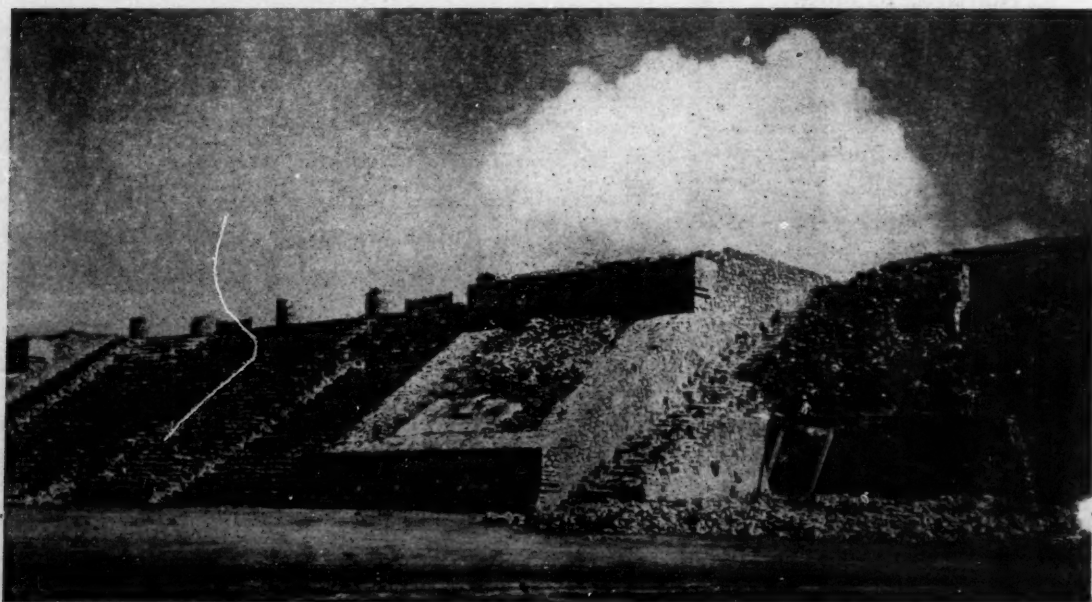
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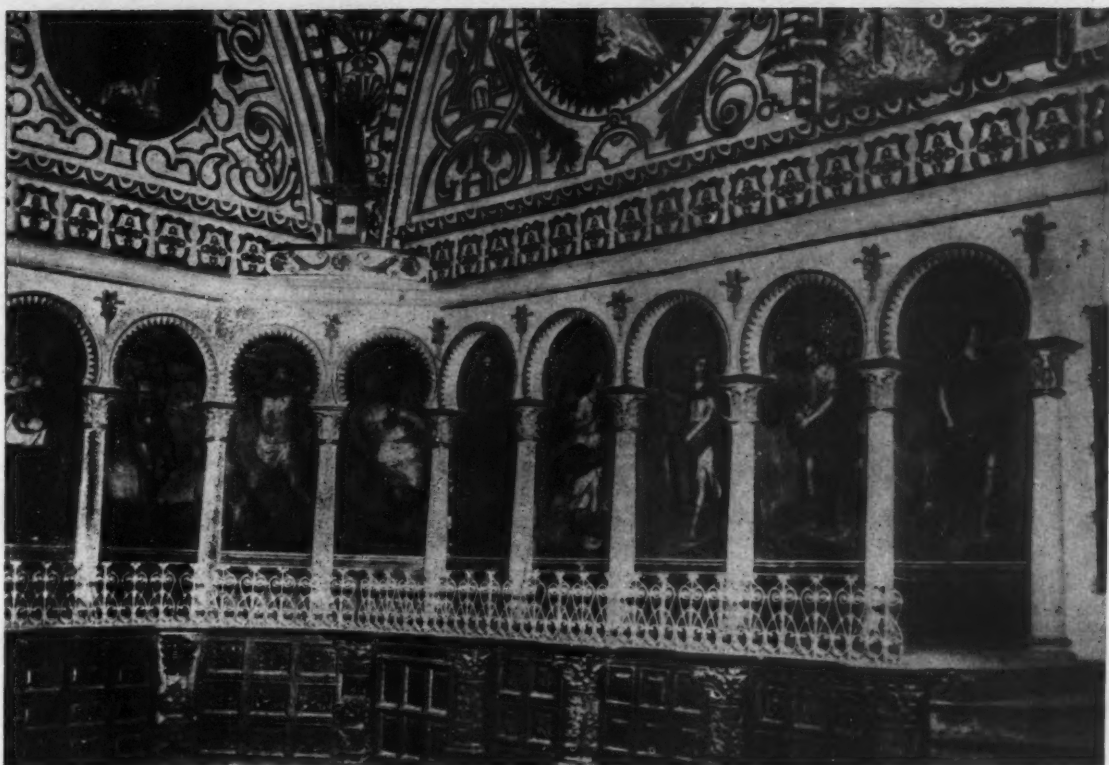
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HOWARD S. PHILLIPS
EDITOR

The City and the Provinces

WHILE the ultimate figures of the national census which was held this month are yet unavailable, it has been officially established that the population of Mexico City and its suburbs within the territory of the Federal District is that of two million, five hundred and fifty thousand, and it is estimated that the total population of the Republic is that of twenty-five million.

These figures represent an increase of twenty percent during the last ten years in the country's total population, and of fifty percent in that of the Federal District. It may be seen therefrom that while the total growth of Mexico's population, unparalleled by any other decade in its history, has been truly extraordinary, the increase in the population of the Federal District is out of proportion with that of the country at large. Equalling ten percent of the total population, the nation's capital city has grown to an extent where it is demographically out of balance. For although its unprecedented growth has been largely due to the vast industrial development in its surroundings, to somewhat reduced mortality rates and the absorption of foreign immigration, it has also entailed a drain on the provinces. The number of people who have moved during the foregone decade from different regions of Mexico to the capital city equals the population of Monterrey or Guadalajara.

Historical causes have contributed to this phenomenon. Throughout the years of civil strife—1910-1920—many rural inhabitants sought greater safety in the towns and cities of the provinces. With Mexico City setting the pace in the subsequent period of reconstruction, it attracted a great number of inhabitants from the provinces, and this influx has continued ever since.

While every Mexican is profoundly devoted to the place of his birth, his "patria chica," the average provincial middleclass Mexican regards the privilege of residing in the Capital as an achievement of utmost success in life. If this goal is unattainable for himself, he wishes that it might be attained by his children. He does not wish, moreover, that his sons follow his own occupation of farmer, artisan or tradesman, but that they acquire some professional calling.

This fact explains the excessively great number of lawyers, doctors and dentists in this city and their acute scarcity in the rural districts. This also explains the shortage of schools in the Federal District and the greatly overcrowded university classrooms. The presence in this city of a superfluous number of petty tradesmen, peddlers, street vendors, middlemen, and

others who follow nonproductive occupations might be also attributed to the same cause.

On the other hand, throughout the provinces there is a shortage of trained and capable men who can provide the initiative for local economic development and contribute their cultural influence to the community. For it is seldom indeed that a young man who acquires a professional training in the Capital returns to his native community in order to make his career. As a general rule, he feels that the veritable reward for his acquired profession can be reaped only in the city.

But in the end only a few achieve this reward. The ambitious provincial usually discovers that life in the city is replete with hardships, that almost every field of endeavor is severely overcrowded and that no matter what pursuit he might choose he confronts acute competition. But this discovery—not even the assurance of a much easier existence in his native town—seldom makes him turn homeward. To return would be a tacit acknowledgement of failure, and for this his pride stands in the way. Uprooted, never fully able to adjust himself to the rigors of city life, he nevertheless stays on, lives on precariously, guarding his hope that some day his luck might turn.

And yet the veritable riches of Mexico, awaiting active minds and industrious hands which may exploit it not solely for individual benefit but for that of the country at large, is to be found in the neglected provinces. Now that the extensive virgin regions, literally saturated with latent wealth, have been made accessible by the new railroads and highways, that new irrigation systems are reclaiming vast sections of hitherto unproductive lands, and new industries are being developed close to the sources of raw materials, rural Mexico provides greater opportunities for resourceful and ambitious youth than ever before.

But in order to behold these opportunities it must free its vision of the ignis fatuus, the deceptive lure, of city lights; it must shed the traditional middleclass aspiration for trade and professionalism; it must, in acquiring a superior knowledge and technical training, employ it where it can yield the most abundant returns.

The future stability of Mexico's economy demands decentralization. It demands a thorough exploitation of its natural resources, the elevation in the living standards of its rural masses, as well as their social integration. And this stability can be assured by way of a rational redistribution of population. The normal and healthy growth of Mexico City itself must depend in the future upon the normal and healthy growth of the underdeveloped provinces.

A Full Program

By Henry Albert Phillips

WITH all the curious small boys and Indian loungers I was attracted and distracted at the same time, by the appearance of a placarded automobile with horns, drum megaphone announcing, "Box y Lucha en el Cine Ana María!" I made inquiries and learned that within the hour there would be a grand show in the tiny movie house behind the Borda Church. The handbill announced:

Preliminary in 4 "Raunds"
"La Pipila" vs. "El Chinopilili"

"La Liebre"
Champion of the 6th Regiment
Vs.

Chato Casanova, of Mexico City

Followed by Wrestling, the best two out of three,

Catch-as-catch-can

Black Guzman
Vs.

Mickey Duran

Prices: Luneta Numerada, 80 centavos
Galeria, 40 centavos

I followed the little crowd of Taxco "sports" down the dark street under the arch to the tiny Ana María theater behind the Borda cathedral. I had wondered about the heap of cornstalks piled outside, until I now saw them being used for padding beneath the canvas boxing ring. This business, in lovely medieval Taxco of all places, was a talisman of the drift of the times

and the sort of thing—together with an American murder, cigarette-smoking trousered female tourists, a typical Greenwich Village colony of serious Thinkers and Bertha's Bar become cocktail conscious—that modernism was thrusting deep into the pattern of Old Mexico. Our arena, or little theater, accommodated perhaps two hundred spectators, totaling a "gate" of some one hundred pesos, or around \$15, to be divided in prize money among ten contestants! The balcony was a crude affair flimsily constructed and threatened to fall into the orchestra when the Indian and half-breed fight fans began stamping their bare feet in promoting their sentiments. The preliminaries began in ludicrous imitation of a Big Fight in Madison Square Garden. The ballyhoo band was stowed away somewhere in the sweltering gallery and played appropriately. The referee received a black eye in the first "event" at the hands of "El chinopilili." Whether this had anything to do with it or not, his opponent was declared the winner of the bout, although we all doubted it in a sinister way that was not propitious, since many in the audience carried guns on their hips while the several soldier-policemen threatened to use their muskets more than once. The time bell consisted of a section of water pipe, which was solemnly rung by a tough-looking half-breed from Mexico City. The "big Fight" was between middleweights and proved to be a rare slug-ging match throughout twelve rounds, during which they pummeled each other into a bloody pulp, finally whirling around the ring literally blind, like two fighting cocks with their eyes pecked out. Black Guzman was finally knocked prone and the referee counted ten in English before he could rise. Mickey Duran, the victor, however, had previously passed out in his corner and they seemed unable to revive him.



OIL.

By Fidel Figueroa.

The Life of Bobby Ortiz Riley

By Herbert Joseph Mangham



Water Color.

By Morris Topchevsky.

BOBBY Ortiz slowly turned on his back, stretched, and looked at the pale light which seeped through the loosely-laid roof tiles. El Capitan crowed outside, hardly two feet from his head. The light slanting through the window came from a rim of sun peering over the mountains east of the village. This window had only bars to keep out marauders. Glass was never needed to keep out the cold, and the broad eaves kept out the summer rains. Bobby had thrown off his blanket with the first warmth of dawn and finished his sleep naked. Only in the winter months did he need even one blanket.

El Capitan crowed again. Bobby ran across the red-tiled floor to the back door. For a moment his blue eyes looked into the sun while its warmth bathed his lithe coppery body and lightly bleached hair. Then he dashed around the corner to capture El Capitan. The rooster's feathers felt silky under his arms and, when he scratched its head, it made a show of ruffled dignity.

Still holding the rooster, Bobby squatted in the corner of the corral under a great mango tree. Two pigs ran up and waited with greedy little eyes. Bobby talked affectionately to El Capitan for a few minutes. There was the last adobe house on their street and one of the few in town with a large corral. The houses further on were of reeds and palm thatch, sometimes with tile roofs, usually with reed-and-thatch walls but sometimes with only reeds through which the rain and dust could blow. A burro, a cow, half a dozen pigs, twenty chickens, and Papacito's well-curried dun horse wandered under the five mango trees.

Bobby threw El Capitan toward the pigs and ran into the house. He tiptoed through the front room, for Papacito and Lupita were still sleeping, their curly black heads close together, unlatched the front door, and stepped into the street, where women were already sweeping around their doorsteps and calling to each other. On second thought he went back for his pants. He had been wearing pants regularly only a few weeks.

He threw them aside when he reached the river. His foot slipped on a patch of wet earth between the stones. He pushed aside some stones and scooped more water on the earth. This made a slippery place where he could sit and, with his feet braced against a rock, squish back and forth in the ooze.

The river for the length of the town was wide and its bottom covered with smooth stones. Now the water seldom reached above his knees, but in summer it rose to his shoulders and blocked all wheeled traffic to the villages beyond. Once, Papacito said, it spread over the town, melted the adobe houses, and forced the people into the hills.

On the far bank the trees, most of them ahuejotes in new finery with a few yellow flowers still scattered among their slender leaves, half hid a few huts and corrals. Behind them two primaveraos burgeoned against the blue sky, great yellow masses just the color of Mother's hair. In another month they too would be green. Bobby responded sensuously to the scarlet, blue, orange, and lavender in the gardens and fields, but the yellow primaveraos pleased him most.

In the riverbed cone-shaped shelters of reeds and boughs screened the women from the sun when they washed their clothes. Rosario Velez, always an early riser, had already finished her husband's shirts and was rubbing yellow soap into her hair. She rinsed it out and then lowered her chemise to her waist so she could soap her back and her full breasts. Readjusting her chemise, she raised it to scrub her fat behind and her legs. Finally she sat on her heels and vigorously threw water over herself.

Bobby continued to squish, but warily. A long shadow was slipping up on him, closer . . . , closer . . . When it developed a cautiously raised arm, he dashed into the water, screaming. He laughed impudently and turned to splash water on his father.

"Just wait!" Domingo Ortiz quickly pulled off his shirt, pants, and pink rayon shorts and dashed in after him. The chase engendered a lot of foam and shouting but was soon over. Domingo pushed him

under the water, lifted him high above his head, and pushed him under again. He carried him back to the shore holding him aloft by one foot.

"I've fathered a pig," said Domingo. The vigorously applied soap made a smooth lather from head to foot with a sweet odor quite different from Rosario Velez's yellow stuff. Finished, his father tossed Bobby back into the river and soaped himself. Then they splashed each other until Domingo called a truce. Domingo put on his clothes, but Bobby had seen something on the far bank.

With his rolled-up pants on his head he waded the river, his feet insensitive to the stones. One of Lauro Sambrano's goats had just given birth to twins. He had never seen kids birthed, though he had seen kittens, pigs, puppies, and calves. He almost saw Panchito Sambrano; he had sat quietly in a corner unnoticed in the confusion, but somebody discovered him just too soon. The twins hadn't even learned to be timid. He touched their wet hair. Sometimes they struggled to reach their mother's teats but their legs soon collapsed and they lay down again. The mother licked their pelts, making affectionate moaning sounds.

Bobby ran up the bank when he caught a glimpse of white through the trees. "Lauro! Lauro! The white goat has just birthed twins!"

Lauro scarcely paused in his wood chopping. "Did you look after her?" he asked seriously.

"She's all right. They're both black and white. Tiny, so tiny!" He held his hands a few inches apart. "I'm going to ask Papacito to buy me one."

Lauro, like Papacito, went as a bracero to the United States and had tales to tell of tall buildings, great fields and rivers, days of travel in trains, planes and trucks, and plentiful dollars. Some of the braceros squandered their earnings on flashy clothes and in the cantinas, but Lauro built up a business that kept him always busy—butchering, curing skins, and buying and selling goats, hides, meat, milk, feed, anything his sharp little eyes fell on. He was too busy to wash himself in the nearby river, or maybe it was that he came from Michoacan highlands where water is scarce and so had not developed the coast people's affection for water.

Bobby waved at Josefina, who was nursing Panchito in the doorway of their reed hut; her first two babies died, but Panchito was proof against grime and Indian food. Bobby walked over to the curing vats, which were set in a cement platform under a thatch roof supported by four poles. Drying skins hung on cords between the poles. Piles of skins soaked in the vats. A slightly sickening odor came from the fresh skins and the barks used in the curing.

"These skins are ready," said Bobby, after a professional look at the lime vat.

"That's right. You know, when you get a little older, I'm going to make you a partner."

"How much older?"

"A few years."

"Two years?"

"At least two years." Lauro rattled on about his business until the odor of frying pork suddenly jogged Bobby's memory.

He crossed the river at the ford this time, leaping from rock to rock like one of Lauro's goats. Papacito had gone when he arrived home. Mother raised Cain when anybody was late for meals; she said that in civilized countries families all sat down at the table at the same time. But Lupita served the food from the stove when anybody wanted it. This morning it was eggs scrambled with tomatoes and onions, tortillas, frijoles, milk, and pan dulce, those popular Mexican assorted sweet breads. Papacito forbid him to drink any liquid away from home that wasn't bottled and

insisted on all water and milk being boiled. Lupita couldn't see any sense in it, but she did as told.

Lupita gave him an impulsive hug before he sat down. Sometimes she screamed at him and smacked him. Mother used to spank him furiously when she was angry, and then again she almost crushed his ribs in sudden rushes of affection. Women are pretty much alike.

With his stomach comfortably full, he watched the traffic from the front doorway—burros, ox teams and occasional trucks carrying cocoanuts, laborers, and shocks of green para for fodder. The boys playing in the street looked immature. He guessed he would wander by the hotel.

A big man with a red face, great hands and a wonderful shirt busied himself with papers spread on a table in the diningroom. He was the first American Bobby had seen in several weeks. He approached him softly.

"Hello!"

"Hello!" The stranger liked these mannerly little brown boys, but he was slightly fed up with offers of shines, guidance and luggage carrying.

Bobby ran his eyes over the cocoanut-palms, the indigo waves, and the lovely ladies with fishtails instead of legs. "How much you pay for that shirt?"

"Oh, you speak English?"

"A little. I learned to read and write a few words, too. But I forget when I not practice much."

"You're precocious, aren't you?"

"Yes, sir. I guess so, sir. I don't know, sir."

"Precocious means you know a lot for your age."

"Oh. Maybe, sir," answered Bobby with caution. That sounded suspiciously like expressions the Mexican used to silence little boys who talked big.

The man looked curiously at Bobby's blue eyes and lightly bleached hair. "Is your father American?"

"No, sir. My mother."

"What's your name?"

"Bobby Ortiz, at your orders, sir."

"You must be Domingo Ortiz's son." He drew Bobby to him; his hand was not slim and muscular like Papacito's but soft and thick, like a layer of Mother's cakes. "Well, if you grow up to be like your father, I'll give you a job any time you ask for it."

"Thank you, sir," said Bobby respectfully, but the big man had slipped a notch in his estimation; suggesting that anybody could be like Papacito was akin to being flippant about the Holy Virgin. The man fished a box of American lozenges out of his bag. "Come and practice your English any time you feel like it," he said.

Bobby placed a pink candy in his mouth and the box in his pants pocket. He felt a little supra-human as he walked into the street with that sweet stream trickling down his throat.

Those angry screams came from Lupe, the crazy woman. Her stringy, graying hair was wound carelessly around her head, a blue waist lay flat on her bony chest, and a yellow-green skirt partially covered her legs. Her gnarled feet kicked up the dust as she made rushes at the three boys who threw sticks at her. The boys never threw to hurt, but they kept her in a day-long fury. The men along the street laughed at her antics and yelled when she grabbed up a small log and gave chase. Bobby jumped up and down and shrieked taunts at her. One of the boys slipped up behind and seized her log. She ran screaming after him. The other boys ran after, taunting.

Bobby's interest veered when they passed Fernando Sotelo's barber shop. Fernando had a kin-

Continued on page 54



Oil.

By Abel Gomez Mesa.

Pátzcuaro

By Hudson Strode

THE ROAD FROM Uruapan to Pátzcuaro again suggested bits of China set in fertile highlands. There were the pagoda gateways and steep thatched hats like those coolie rickshaw boys wear mingled with the more conventional Mexican sombrero. The little boys and girls looked particularly well nourished and lively, and might easily have been first cousins of Chinese or Japanese children. The sparkling weather was crisp and warm at the same time—sky-blue and sungold weather—and the young crops were green and fresh.

Suddenly clouds appeared out of nowhere and a soft rain began to fall, just the right kind of rain for tender growing things. One gets to expecting rains on summer afternoons in Mexico. Often they are merely brief showers and cause little interruption in a program. As we approached Pátzcuaro, the rain became a fine mist that made a gauzy veil over the landscape. Because it was already late afternoon, we did not go into the town, but stopped at the hotel on the lake, where we had reservations. The hostelry was appropriately named the Vasco de Quiroga. It was new and architecturally pleasing, built to look like a spreading Spanish manor house. Part of it was one story, part of it two, with a pleasant patio and colonnades and inner galleries and a staircase almost as spacious and easy to climb as that of the Virrey de Mendoza. The architect had utilized some of the best features of the old Bishop's palace at Morelia.

Our room lay on the broad outer gallery that faced the lake. The new flower garden and an orange grove belonging to General Cárdenas followed the slope down to the lake shore. Pátzcuaro, which had been the summer home of Tarascan kings before the Span-

iards came, was Cárdenas's favorite spot in Mexico. Here he had built the house to which he retired when his term of Presidency was over in December, 1940. Among his lime and orange trees he had intended to spend whatever period of private time the public would permit him. But he had had less than a year of privacy, because the Government called him back into service as Secretary of War after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

The gallery of the hotel was long and wide and edged with an interesting balustrade of wood, painted a dull henna color. We paused to gaze on the lake. There was no sunset to illumine the scene, and the mist had turned the hills into a platinum monotone. The little islands looked like coins of oxidized silver. The sky seemed to hang very low over the grey silk sheet of lake. In color the sky had a faint green tinge of absinthe dropped in water. Far off in the middle left distance, on an eminence of an island, stood a bold white monument—the figure of a robed man with uplifted arm. It was a stylized reproduction of the revolutionary priest José María Morelos. Even in the dim light of a misty afternoon it looked strangely incongruous. At the extreme left of the scene, just barely within range, rose the funeral plume of Paracutín, its billowing menace turned to mere decorative beauty.

Since we had been indulging all day in the emotions of seeing unfamiliar sights, we decided to take a brief siesta before dinner. When we got up to dress, the atmosphere had grown so chilly there seemed a touch of Scotland in the air. Therese wore her tweed coat for comfort and I warmed myself with a whisky and soda in the bar, where Hoagland and Wagus join-

ed us. Wagus had some news. "We have just missed Ann Sheridan—she was here last week with many sweaters and all her 'umph.' By the way, they have reserved her table for us in the dining-room."

The table for four was set by a great open fireplace crackling with cheering logs. The dinner was served by girls in native costume. The fish was something to rave about. It was the famed pescado blanco, the white fish in which the lake abounds. Served with slices of green lime it is to my taste unsurpassed by that of any other fish. One could get too much of salmon and too much of pompano, but there was nothing surfeiting in the flavor of pescado blanco. Nature had blessed the region in filling the lake's thirty-mile circumference with food fit for gods and in bestowing on it a climate pleasing to limes.

It was all so satisfying that we lingered over dinner an unseasonable time before the fire, after Señor Sánchez and all the other guests had finished and left the room. At last we tore ourselves away from the fire, and traversing the arcade about the patio, we sought shelter in the drawing-room. Here there was no fire, no fireplace, no method of heating provided. The room was well-proportioned, but most differently furnished.

We tried to amuse ourselves with old copies of illustrated Mexican magazines. Then we selected the exact portion of a wall that cried out for a baronial fireplace. The manager, a Spaniard of good breeding, was pleased that our choice of a fireplace site accorded precisely with his. "A little blaze is of course desirable in this climate of cool nights," he agreed. "And the proper furniture is ordered," he added, divining our criticisms. "But you know what war does to make delays." At the door he turned and said: "I think Madame should have a hot-water bottle for her bed. I'll send one up now. And tomorrow morning we shall have a fire in the dining-room for breakfast."

Thérèse, who could never bear to be trouble to anyone, did not demur about the hot-water bottle—she merely thanked the proprietor warmly for his thoughtfulness.

Señor Sánchez appeared out of the shadows to bid us good night. "Tomorrow will be fine," he said with assurance, "for a boat trip on the lake."

"How blessed are the feet of him who bringeth good tidings—" Hoagland murmured appreciatively. And this little descendant of Aztecs had a way of seeming to bless situations.

The morning was as fine as Señor Sánchez had predicted. Sunshine poured molten gold upon the near slopes and distant hills and there was a sparkling radiance on the water of the lake. The highland air made one lift the head and breathe deep.

We breakfasted leisurely near the open fire of mountain logs. The oranges pulled from the hotel-garden trees were not quite ripe and the juice had too much tang; but the ham and eggs were ham and eggs on a brisk morning before a welcome fire.

I recalled that I had a mission to perform for a friend of mine in Memphis. "If you go to Pátzcuaro," she had written, "find a little crippled boy named Manuel Solís, who lives near the railway station. Please let him guide you about, however inexpertly. We took a great fancy to him and adopted him 'spiritually.'" I left the others lingering over a second cup of coffee. On the front veranda I sought Señor Sánchez to get him to take me into the town to find the lad. I approached some boys who were lounging on the edge of the veranda. The one in the largest hat and clean blue overalls caught my attention with his smile. He smiled like an angel, an angel surrounded by natural imps of Satan. There was no sanctimony in the smile, no silly cherubic roguishness—just a

pure smile of goodwill, a wish for the other person's happiness.

"I am going out to find a boy named Manuel Solís," I said. "Could you take me to him? Do you know him?"

The other boys began to laugh gleefully. What a joke!

"Yo soy Manuel Solís, señor," the one in the big hat said, his smile now lighting up his whole face. If the boy was not pure white, he had no more than a sixteenth of Indian blood. His eyes were gray, his eyebrows light-brown.

"No," I said doubtfully. The coincidence was too pat. "He lives near the railway station."

"Sí, sí. Yo soy Manuel Solís." The boy slipped from the edge of the veranda and stood on the ground.

"No," I insisted, and then appealed to the other boys. "Is he?"

"Sí, sí!" they shouted in unison. "Es verdad. Es Manuel Solís."

"I have a letter—" The boy took a step forward. His leg was sadly twisted, and the limp was marked. This was unquestionably the Manuel Solís my friend had written about. I showed him the name signed to the letter—"Jenny Gardner."

"Sí, sí! Señora Gardner! I have many letters from her and a picture of her casa, with snow."

I invited Manuel Solís to be an assistant guide to Señor Sánchez. When Thérèse and the men came out I introduced him.

"He looks like an angel in overalls," Thérèse said promptly as he took off his enormous straw hat. His hair was brown and fine in texture and it had been combed.

"He is the friend of Señora Gardner in Memphis," I said. "His mother is a widow and lives near the railway station and takes in washing. His father was a rural schoolteacher and was murdered by Indians in the mountains of Guerrero." I knew all this from the letter.

One of the inquisitive boys began searching in a tattered Spanish-English pocket dictionary for a word.

Manuel Solís smiled apologetically, and said in Spanish, "If I had one of those books I could learn English more quickly."

Dr. Hoagland was struck with a sudden thought and excused himself. In a flash he was back with a little red book in his hand—a present for Manuel Solís.

The boy's face brightened, and he held the book in his two hands for a moment in ecstatic half-belief. As he moved into a shaft of intense sunlight, his yellowish straw hat was like an oversized halo in a stained-glass window. An expression of deep thoughtfulness came over his face as he debated on the first Spanish word he would look up to learn its English equivalent. Wagus and I stood on either side of him, and watched him turn the thin pages to the B's. His finger went down a page and up the other page and stopped. He impressed the word on his mind, murmured it to himself, holding his right forefinger there, while a black-eyed urchin crowded close, took a look, nodded his head, and sniggered. Wagus and I bent to see and noted the line which had arrested the moving finger. Then Wagus gently took the book from Manuel Solís's hand. He stared in surprise, grinned, and held the page to my eye, his fingernail marking the place.

"Is this the word you wanted?" he asked Manuel Solís.

"Sí," said the boy quite naturally.

The Spanish word was *burdel*. After the comma came the English "brothel."

Of all the thousands of words to interest him, why did the child want to know "brothel?" Just abo-

ve it lay buquetatro, which means "showboat," something gay and romantic. And above that buque, just ordinary "boat," the most significant word on the lake after "fish." And above that was bunuelo, "bun, pancake, fritter," a thing most natural to interest a growing boy. But burdel was the word of words he chose.

"Do you know what it means?" Wagus asked.

"Sí," Manuel Solís said again most naturally. "There is one not far from where I live. I have taken tourists there."

So, it was doubtless professional, not personal, interest that had led him to the word. As a good guide, the twelve-year-old had to know what men wanted to see in his town by night as well as by day.

Whatever the reason for his interest in the brothel, whether he himself went no farther than a commanding knock on the portal or whether he went inside and even sipped beer to beguile the time of waiting for his client, one thing seemed certain—the lad was untouched by whatever he had seen or known. For him there was nothing in the word "brothel" to fear or shy away from. Whatever happened in life—going to confession or visiting a brothel, going to school or flying a kite, the ripening of corn or the outbreak of a volcano—all were merely manifestations of human destiny. And everything was to be taken with good heart: his father's murder, his own ill-set broken leg.

Here was a lad who was not a pipe for fortune's finger to play jigs and dirges upon at will. He responded to life as a whole, and by some strange dispensation he seemed to divine that only attitude of mind made things good or bad, and so he chose to make things good. And I could conceive of his going completely through life's cycle impervious in spirit to buffets and vicissitudes, and making his smiling passage a momentary benediction as he limped past.

Manuel Solís, holding his dictionary tenderly, sat in the front seat of the car with Señor Sánchez and me, and on the way to the boat landing I gave him a brief lesson in English. He reciprocated by giving me one in politeness.

"Whenever anyone gives you something, as el Señor Doctor Hoagland gave you el diccionario, you must say, 'Thank you very much.'"

Manuel Solís thanked me for the advice. "And, señor," he said politely after a pause, as if teaching me manners for teaching him manners, "when one gives you anything and he thanks you, you should say, 'De nada'—'It is nothing.'"

We arrived at the cluster of rude piers, where large rowboats and small motor-boats lay moored awaiting custom. Several of the boatmen stood up and called out ingratiatingly. Two started forward to press us with invitation. And then I saw behind them all the one I wanted. He sat in his outboard motor boat regarding us quietly. In the strong sunlight his Indian face was like a highlighted bronze mask. It was a sturdy, dignified, and melancholy face. Somehow, strangely I knew this fellow. He turned his head to the side and I was without doubt. There was no mistaking that profile, the sculptural cut of that nose and chin. But he had grown younger. This fellow was hardly twenty. I caught his eye, and his expression did not change. He did not seek to be chosen, but he would like to be, if it required no demonstrable effort on his part.

"There's the fellow," I said to Señor Sánchez, "in the back. I know him. He's an old friend."

Señor Sánchez looked at me uncertainly. "Señor?" he questioned.

"That very fellow is in my studio in the woods at home. He has a net in his hand, a stout pole over his shoulder. He is going fishing with a brother. Lake

Pátzcuaro is behind the pair, just like this." I indicated the expanse of water, and appealed to Thérèse. She confirmed my claim.

"Why, of course," she said, "he might easily have been the model—the same profile, the same expression, the same shoulders."

"It's the best poster the National Railways ever got out," I said.

Señor Sánchez smiled and nodded to the fellow. Deftly the youth manipulated the boat up to the pier. His shoulders were as good as the man's in the poster.

Señor Sánchez asked the price of the boat. "Give him whatever he asks," I said. The price seemed more than moderate.

"Como se llama Usted?" I asked.

"Preciliano, señor." He did not add, "a sus ordenes," but said simply, "Presiliano, señor." His voice was low and melodious.

"Did anyone ever paint your picture—or make a drawing of you?"

He shook his head negatively and smiled slowly. "No, señor." Then he said in Spanish, "But one day an artist from Mexico City painted my two cousins."

"Are they fishermen?"

"Sometimes they fish."

"Surely," I said to Thérèse and the others, "they are the ones in the poster. At any rate I know now they are authentic Tarascans and not a studio creation."

Gravely Preciliano steadied the boat as we got in, and gravely he started the motor.

Manuel Solís sat close to Preciliano, intently remarking the process of starting. He might have been any little sunburned American boy off for a picnic in a great straw hat.

The motor behaved creditably, and we were ready to venture anywhere within the thirty-mile circumference. We let Señor Sánchez and Preciliano make the suggestions and then I consulted Manuel Solís.

As we adjusted ourselves comfortably to the board seats, we gave ourselves over to the worship of the Sunday morning. Because it was Sunday there was no activity of fishing boats. As far as we could see, the area of aquamarine was our domain. The sky was an azure tent pegged down beyond the encircling mountains. Again we noted that remarkable clarity in the atmosphere that made the sharply etched hills look like designs cut out and pasted on a vibrant light-blue background. Where the land was fertile between the rocks, lime and lemon trees held their orderly stations right down to the phalanxes of spearlike water reeds.

A fish passed close to our boat, slicing the green-blue surface with the silver blade of a fin, and it dived among the roots of some exotic water orchids. The whirling blades of motor churned the water to make a gold-flecked trail behind us, luminous and transitory, like a comet's tail. The sun began to warm us through and through. Thérèse took off her coat and Preciliano his jacket. There was no sound whatever except that of the humble motor propelling us over the glassy surface and making it possible for Preciliano to rest his rowing arms. No one desired to talk. It was all tranquil and exciting. Even the two or three new villas set in orchards on the slopes of the receding mainland looked peaceful and unobtrusive, despite the indifferent taste in architectural style.

The sea-loving Joseph Conrad once said that only a thousand miles from land could one come in contact with his own soul. But here no more than one mile from land there was a strange exhilaration of escape, as if one had shaken off the problems of this earthly world at the pier. Gliding over this flat, jewel-bright floor, set so high in Mexico's geography, one could

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The new Calzada Gral. Mariano Escobedo is being built from the underground up.

The New Boulevard Gral. Mariano Escobedo

By Gerald Thornby

THE NUMEROUS residential and industrial sections which have been added to the expanding area of Mexico City in the course of the foregone decade have greatly complicated the problem of inter-urban communication. The thoroughfares connecting these new districts with the center can no longer adequately cope with the heavy traffic, and for this reason the present municipal government, headed by Lic. Fernando Casas Alemán, has been lending special attention to the task of modernizing and amplifying these thoroughfares in order that they may facilitate communication throughout the outlying districts and relieve traffic congestion in the center.

Having completed during the last three years such major projects as the new Calzada de Guadalupe, the modernization of the Paseo de la Reforma, of the Avenidas Insurgentes and Chapultepec, the Department of the Federal District has recently initiated another important project—that of converting the present Calzada Gral. Mariano Escobedo into an ultra-modern boulevard and extending it to the North-East over an approximate length of eight kilometers, where it will connect with the Mexico-Laredo Highway.

Beginning at the Paseo de la Reforma and Chapultepec Park the new boulevard will traverse the residential sections of Anzures, Morales, Anahuac, Popotla, San Alvaro, Pro-Hogar, Cosmopolita, Clave-

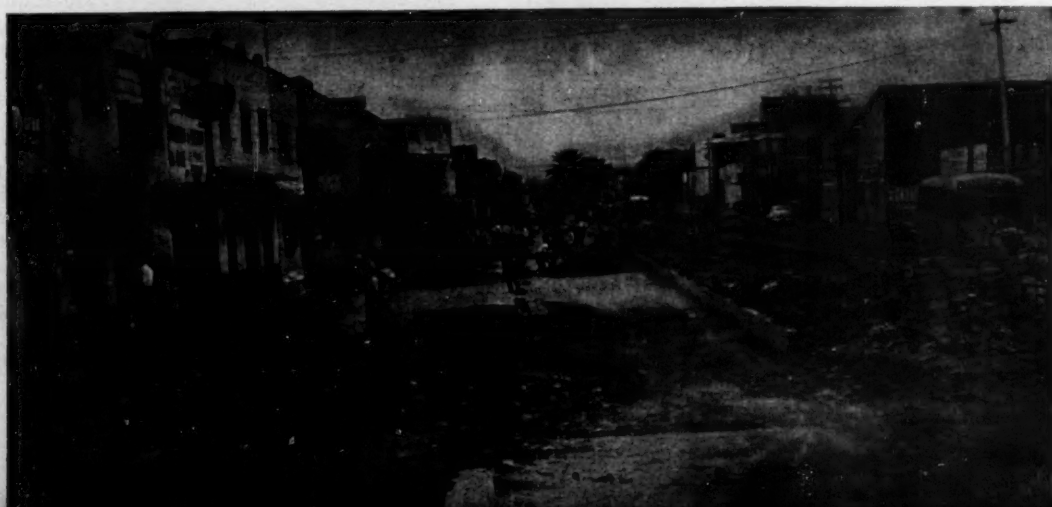
ria, Nueva Santa Maria, Vallejo, Atzacapotzalco and Guadalupe Tepeyac. It will also provide a direct thoroughfare to the freight yards of the National Railways which are soon to be built in the vicinity of the Nueva Colonia Santa Maria.

The width of the new boulevard will be thirty-six meters throughout its entire length. With a gravelled and tree-lined lane six meters wide running through its middle, it will have two spacious lanes for vehicular traffic and sidewalks three meters wide. While its course largely follows the alignment of coinciding streets, it represents a project of veritable magnitude because of its enormous length, and because it is being built from the "underground up," with new installations of water and sewerage mains and the sturdiest type of concrete pavement.

In providing a direct thoroughfare that will traverse the entire North-West section of the city the new Calzada Gral. Mariano Escobedo will greatly enhance the real estate value of all the residential districts along its course and stimulate the development of new residential and industrial districts.

Under the able administration of Lic. Fernando Casas Alemán the City of Mexico, in the throes of unprecedented growth, is freeing itself of its constrictive molds and is evolving into a metropolis of splendid boulevards.

Sections of the Calzada Gral. Mariano Escobedo in process of transformation.





The Calzada Gral. Mariano Escobedo will be eight kilometers in length.



Men at work along the new Calzada Gral. Mariano Escobedo.



Patterns of an Old City

By Howard S. Phillips

A PAIR OF ROLLER SKATES

THAT Saturday noon, on his way home, Sanchez was again harassed by the problem of having to devise a satisfactory explanation for the thirty and some odd pesos missing from his weekly pay. This was the third consecutive week that he confronted this problem, and he had the disheartening feeling that the same pretext of a dentist bill would not work this time—that Trini, with her uncanny omniscience, would see through it and immediately accuse him of falsehood and subterfuge, insisting that he was a shameless and dissolute rake and had spent the money with some streetcorner strumpet.

It was at such trying moments that Sanchez perceived the inherent absurdity of his existence. He was forty-two, and yet, being younger than his sisters, they treated him as if he were an irresponsible boy of twelve. He was denied the slightest measure of personal freedom and his life was completely shorn of privacy; they knew every move he made and everything he did as well as they knew the dishes he liked or disliked or the sizes of his shirts or hose.

As a young man he periodically experienced a rebellious impulse, an urge to break away, to achieve an independent existence, or to shape a normal life for himself by getting married and bringing up a family of his own. But his rebellion was always frustrated in the end. Habit and his sisters' influence bore upon him with a relentless force. They had always lived together like this, since their parents died when he was eight years old, and their haltered, compact life, with all its oddity, seemed to them perfectly normal. From the very beginning, Trini, being the oldest of the four, assumed a motherly authority which she never relinquished. While he, being the youngest, being the "baby in the family," more than any one of the four served as a bond which held them together. He was the man in the household, a brother who filled a vicarious role of a son and a father.

His periodical rebellions had been fruitless because deep at heart he always felt that he could never abandon his sisters. He grew up and reached his maturity under their doting care, and no matter how alluring the perspective of a different mode of life might have been, he felt that he was inseparably tied to his sisters, that he would never be able to adjust himself to a life apart from theirs.

Trini, who was now in her sixties, had suppressed in her youth all yearnings of marriage because her face had been badly marred by smallpox when she was a child. And although Chucha and Lucha could have probably had their chances, through a deep mutual sense of loyalty, as if by an unspoken pact, they overlooked such chances and remained single. They lived on the second floor of an ample house their father had left them, at the corner of two streets bearing arboreal names in Colonia Santa Maria. While their parents were alive the family occupied the entire house, but with their death, guided by Trini's business acumen, they partitioned off the lower floor into several small shops, and the rents they obtained therefrom almost provided for their household needs. This income was supplemented by earnings from such sundry occupations frequently pursued by old maids as applying injections, knitting sweaters, embroidering

doilies, confectioning cookies or candied fruit and preserves. And then there was of course their brother's modest salary, earned as a minor clerk in a government office, which he was supposed to deliver each week intact to Trini who supervised the family budget. From this she always apportioned to him a small amount for such indispensable needs as carfare, bootblacks, a daily package of cigarettes, or an occasional bottle of beer, plus a nominal sum for pocket change. A methodical allotment was made once or twice a year for expenditures of larger amounts, such as for shoes or clothing. Trini was something of a genius in matters of handling money and usually managed to put away something for a rainy day from their small aggregate earnings.

Among their neighbors they were referred to simply as "las Sanchez," or more often as "las cotorras,"—"the parrots"—which is a somewhat opprobrious designation for old maids. And because in their case it might have appeared unseemly or even derisive, people seldom addressed them by the proper title "Señorita," familiarly calling them Luchita, Chuchita and Trinita, which is the affectionate diminutive form for María de la Luz, María de Jesús and María Trinidad.

* * *

Sanchez boarded the crowded Santa Maria bus in an unhappy and irresolute frame of mind. He wondered whether he should not face the issue squarely, tell his sisters the truth and face the consequences. To be evasive, to lie about it, would only defer the problem a while longer, but it would not provide a final solution. But what, he asked himself, is this final solution? Am I indeed facing a situation which requires a drastic final solution? Or am I merely imagining things—fooling myself, jumping at silly conclusions? Then, deep beneath his fear and indecision he sensed the sudden joyousness, the strange excitement that had stirred his heart for days, and sensing it he knew that indeed something extremely significant was transpiring in his life—something that could not be deferred or put aside or gradually extinguished. He knew that for once in his lifetime the decision would not rest with his sisters—that he would have to decide for himself.

The next instant, however, the whole thing seemed to him completely absurd. My head is filled with nonsense, he thought. I am seeing visions, building air castles. My life is what it is; it was meant to be like this, and I can never change it. Wedged in the crowd, clasping a strap overhead, his knees often bumping against those of a man who sat in front of him, he perceived that he was accompanied by a woman and a small, solemn-eyed boy who sat between them and who from time to time said something to either one or the other, receiving a smile and a nod in reply. And watching them a new calm rested over his mind, and his problem suddenly seemed to him so perfectly simple as to be no problem at all. Sanchez, he said to himself, you have been a sorry fool all your life, and maybe now you are a greater fool than you have ever been, but now at least you have the courage to see yourself as you are. You have the courage not to accept yourself unthinkingly, and this will show you the way out.

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Water Color.

By Clara Thorward.

Holiday in the Cerrado

By Dana Lamb

AFTER the dirt and insects of the cerrado, the fine clean sand looked good to me, and I proposed that we stay on the beach for several days. The canoe was in none too good a shape and needed a coat of shark-oil paint. But to my astonishment Ginger wasn't quite satisfied with the place.

"What's the matter?" I asked. "I don't know what better camp site any one could ask than this."

"It is a fine place," she agreed, "but there are no coco-nut palms here."

"Just what are you driving at?" I demanded.

Had I forgotten that tonight was New Year's Eve? Why not a New Year's party? Of course, you had to have something with which to celebrate such an occasion. It took about four hours to ferment coco-nut sap. If you put the sap in the still... it was the same procedure as making fresh water.

A great light broke over me. "Oh, that's it! Let's go."

But where to find a coco-nut grove? Two miles down the lagoon we sighted a village. Approaching closer, we could see that it was deserted. We beached the canoe and wandered among the tumbledown huts. Off to one side there was a large graveyard which contained nearly two hundred graves of approximately the same age. The huts indicated that the village had had a population of perhaps two hundred people. Then I remembered the story that the old man at Punta Duro had told us. This must be the village of La Barra whose inhabitants had died of malaria. We left it in a hurry.

Six miles south of La Barra we found the ideal site for our second holiday camp. A beautiful grove

of coco-nut trees grew on a grass-covered beach on the ocean side of the blue lagoon. While Ginger prepared the midday meal, I cut down a large palm—felling it in such a way that the butt end of the bole was higher than the top; then I trimmed off its branches, and cut a square hole in its trunk just below the heart. The sap began to drain immediately into the cavity.

After lunch we went back to the tree with our mess kettles. The hole was completely filled with foaming sap which we dipped out into the pots and set in the sun. In an hour we had two gallons of the fluid. We poured this into the five-gallon still can, added a little sugar, and hung the can over the cooking fire out of reach of the ants. While waiting for it to ferment, we cut a trail to the beach and enjoyed another long swim. At four o'clock we returned to camp, and while Ginger started dinner I rigged up the still and built a good fire under it. As soon as the liquid in the can became hot, I raked away most of the coals so that it would just simmer, then began pouring cold lagoon water over the condensing can. Alcohol will not condense at as high a temperature as does water. When more sap collected in the palm bole, I added it to the quantity already in the still.

Dinner over, we made additional preparations for the party by constructing small bombs out of powder from .22 shells.

At ten o'clock we were ready to celebrate New Year's Eve in the traditional fashion. It must have been a grand party, but we both had a little difficulty remembering some of the evening's finer details the next morning. I remember sitting on the bank in the moonlight and toasting the New Year, the Ad-

venturer's Trail, Mexico and the Mexican people, the fallen palm that had produced this magic brew, and even the mosquitoes that buzzed round our ears—it was that kind of a party. We exploded the bombs at midnight, but were disappointed in the amount of noise they made. By then nothing short of a cannon would have been entirely satisfactory. However, there was nothing ineffective about the liquid dynamite that we had concocted; it was an outstanding success.

The next morning, after a few simple restoratives, a swim in the ocean and a very light breakfast, we packed our things and sailed on down the lagoon. At ten o'clock we arrived at the little village of Zapotal.

As we swung in towards the shore, the natives ran up and down the beach screaming and shouting, "Viva Año Nuevo—Feliz Año Nuevo." The village had been waiting for us all morning, the Presidente informed us, and had prepared a New Year's fiesta in our honour. How they could possibly have known of our arrival we have no idea. We got only smiles in answer to our questions. After the Presidente gave us the "familiar embrace" the crowd almost tore us to pieces, overwhelming us with offers of food and drink. A marimba began playing, and everyone started to dance. It was a perfect bedlam as the roar of home-made fireworks mingled with the music and the shouts and laughter of the hilarious natives.

To our relief, things quieted down a bit after lunch when the siesta hour claimed some of the celebrants. The pampa was wide at this point, and since there was a fair breeze, I suggested to the Presidente that we take him out for a sail. As usual when the villagers got wind of what we meant to do, they all tried to clamber aboard. Only the Presidente's authority saved the canoe from foundering on the spot. To preserve peace I promised to take the crowd in relays later. Most of the afternoon consequently passed in treating the Indians to a ride—four at a time. None had ever been in a sailboat before, and they almost fell overboard in their excitement.

When it came the children's turn, they were so excited that we could hardly control them. Little Indians are ordinarily the best-behaved children in the world, but these youngsters were beside themselves. A dozen or more would try to climb into the canoe at once—we could carry only eight. They squealed and waved their arms to their friends on shore. Occasionally a child would try to stand upright on deck.

Finally the last boatload had been safely returned to their anxious mothers, and we sighed with relief. Now, we thought, we can join their parents or rest a bit. But there was no way to rid ourselves of the children; they clung to our garments, all of them talking at once and clamouring for attention.

"How about teaching them some games?" Ginger suggested.

After securing the Presidente's permission, Ginger took the little girls to a near-by clearing, where she taught them "Blindman's buff," "Drop the handkerchief," and "In and out the window." I started the boys playing "Dare base." In a few minutes some of the younger men broke away from the dancing and joined us.

One attractive young man, by the name of Emiliano, introducing himself to me, asked me to teach the games to him, so that he could continue to instruct the village children after our departure. I showed him Indian wrestling, "cock fight" and similar games, which he in turn taught to the other young men.

By sundown a regular field meet was in progress, with nearly the entire contingent of able-bodied villagers participating. A "tug of war" wound up the festivities.

Emiliano owned the only oxcart in the village,

and he was also the only person who seemed to know anything about the country to the south. The lagoon on which Zapotal was located turned inland, he said, and the next lagoon that was parallel to the coast lay six miles beyond it. There were no connecting waterways. The portage would have to be made by oxcart. He readily agreed to transport us to the next pampa the following afternoon.

Emiliano was as good as his word, and left us at a village called Punta Llano. From there on for the next two weeks everything went wrong.

Leaving Punta Llano, we sailed on down the lagoon, hoping by some hook or crook to reach the pampa below it. Natives whom we met en route assured us that the way was entirely blocked by dense growths of fresh-water plants such as we had fought our way through farther back. Once was enough; so, disappointed, we retraced our steps to an uncharted bar we had discovered.

We sat round for several days on the sand dunes, waiting for the high seas to subside; and had just about made up our minds to risk the surf and continue on down the coast, when a horseman brought word that the Presidente of Zapotal was waiting for us at Punta Llano. He wished to see us, said the messenger, because he had heard that we were marooned at the bar; and he wanted to tell us about another estero that would lead us to the lagoons further south. This puzzled us, because the Presidente had apparently been unaware of such a passage only a few days before. But you never knew with natives, we told ourselves.

Back in Punta Llano I searched for the Presidente in vain. "No, Señor, he is not here, nor has he been here," said the villagers. I left Ginger, borrowed a horse, and rode to Zapotal; but the elusive Presidente was not there. Perhaps, said the natives, he might be found in Las Quatch, one of the three little villages under his authority. I borrowed a dugout and went to Las Quatch, where I finally caught up with him in the store that he owned.

"No, Señor," he admitted under questioning, "there are no other esteros. But it is very dangerous for you to attempt to sail on the ocean, and I thought if we could bring you back you might be persuaded to make the journey to Manguito by oxcart. I will arrange for the carts."

This sounded fine, and I gratefully accepted his offer. Manguito was ten leguas, roughly thirty miles, due south. With the exception of one small lagoon, the country between Punta Llano and Manguito seemed impassable except by oxcart.

Back in Zapotal, I hunted up Emiliano, and arranged with him to transport the canoe to the village of El Lombardo, where the Presidente had promised to have the carts. El Lombardo, Zapotal, and Las Quatch were the three pueblos over which he Presided. El Lombardo was nearest to Punta Llano, only a mile away. Emiliano agreed to be in Punta Llano early the next morning.

Well pleased with the results of my trip, I hurried to Punta Llano to tell Ginger the good news.

We were up at daylight, ready and waiting for Emiliano, but noon came and he failed to appear. About three o'clock I became uneasy, and again borrowed a horse and started back to Zapotal in search of him. According to the arrangements I had made with the Presidente, we should have left El Lombardo hours ago.

On the way I met the cart. Emiliano was riding a horse and importantly shouting orders to a very drunk native by the name of Pancho, who was driving the oxen. I had made Pancho's acquaintance during the New Year's festivities in Zapotal; and he had been drunk and quarrelsome on that occasion. The day af-

ter, still drunk, he had accompanied us on horseback to Punta Llano, and had fallen off his horse. I was anything but pleased to see Pancho.

In Punta Llano we finally loaded the canoe and equipment on the cart, but not before Pancho had driven us almost as crazy as Pedro of Aguas Pocas fame had done. He backed the oxen into the brush, got tangled up in the harpoon, dropped the equipment box in the mud, and finally insisted on riding on the canoe.

When we reached El Lombrado there were no carts waiting for us as promised. The Presidente's secretario finally put in an appearance. Tomorrow there would be carts, he said. In the meantime, he had arranged for us to stay in the village overnight. The teams would arrive at daylight.

At nine o'clock the next morning one cart did arrive. The other cart would arrive at noon, we were told. Late in the afternoon we learnt that the cart would arrive in the morning.

We were up before daylight of the second morning, all packed and ready to go. At ten o'clock the secretario started out to find the missing cart. He returned in triumph with it, but announced that its driver refused to make the trip. At the secretario's suggestion we began loading the canoe on the driverless cart; he assured us that before we had finished, he would have secured a driver. To say the least, this was optimism on his part. When the canoe was finally loaded, he reappeared with the good news that the first cartman had reconsidered and now refused to make the trip.

"Contain yourself, Señor," said the secretario soothingly, "I go now to find drivers—it will be very simple." Everything would be fine, he said, if we would exercise patience. Just then Pancho, quite sober, put in an appearance, and volunteered his services. We thanked him, but told the secretario privately that under no circumstances would we consider Pancho. No, no, if we didn't want Pancho that was quite all right, the secretario said; it was a simple matter to get drivers. Nothing could disturb his serenity. He hurried off.

At last the drivers were secured, and everything looked rosy. At that point the secretario handed me a letter. This letter, he said, was to the Presidente of La Calle, a village half-way between El Lombrado and Manguito: it requested him to furnish us with oxcarts and men for the rest of the trip, since the drivers from this village did not know the way past La Calle.

Any such scheme as this was just asking for trouble and we knew it. No, I said, we'd give up the idea of making the portage and take our chances with the ocean. How did we know that we could get oxcarts in La Calle? Why, said the secretario and the Presidente, it would be just as easy to get oxcarts in La Calle as it had been in El Lombrado. That statement alone should have warned us.

We were all ready to leave when we noticed Pancho standing by the oxen of the canoe cart. Ginger asked the Presidente if Pancho were making the trip. No, he answered, just walking a little ways—the driver was an especial friend of Pancho's. We started off. Pancho walking beside the lead cart, while I walked beside the second cart on which Ginger rode.

On the outskirts of town, the driver of the lead cart said that he had forgotten something in the village and must go back and get it; in just a few minutes he would rejoin the carts, but we were not to wait. Then he ran past us in a great hurry. And that was the last we were to see of him. The driver of the second cart had difficulty in starting his team, so some time elapsed before we again came in sight of Pancho, who was riding astride the canoe. I hauled him down in a hurry.

Right then and there we should have gone back to El Lombrado—and saved ourselves a lot of trouble. Pancho, I found out, couldn't drive an ox team; but for some unknown reason he had made up his mind to go with us. Porfirio, the driver of the second cart, was an experienced man; and so we compromised by giving him the lead cart, and making Pancho drive the second cart—after a fashion.

The road led through dense jungle, and was uneven and full of roots. There were swarms of mosquitoes, and flies of a particularly dangerous species, which bit us behind the ears. These flies deposit their eggs beneath the skin of a living host; and if the eggs are not removed before they have had time to hatch, the maggots burrow deeper into the flesh. The natives say the flies cause blindness. While travelling through an extremely dense section of growth both ox teams plunged off the road and into the brush. Porfirio explained that the bite of a certain fly, which inhabits this heavy undergrowth, drives the animals crazy; and that whenever they begin to annoy the beasts, the oxen become uncontrollable.

In the late afternoon we passed through a lovely stretch of country, and I wanted to take a picture of it, including myself and the oxen. We stopped the teams, while I went on ahead to set the camera and start the automatic device. Then I sprinted back towards the carts. This frightened the oxen, who took to the brush. But I finally got their pictures and my own by roping their horns to a tree. These oxen, I might mention—the natives have a weakness for fancy names—were called Grano de Oro (Grain of Gold), Noble, Diamante and Rosita! The names were without exception inappropriate—particularly Grano de Oro and Noble, for that precious pair were neither golden nor noble.

Arrived at La Calle soon after sundown. Pancho said he was on the verge of collapse; even though he had ridden on the equipment cart for hours while I led his team. We learnt, furthermore, that the Presidente was not in La Calle. The villagers thought he could be found in La Blanca, about a mile away. We tried to induce Pancho to stay behind and rest while we went in search of him; but in this, as in everything else, Pancho was contrary; if we went to La Blanca, he, Pancho, would go to La Blanca—even if it killed him. He moaned and groaned as we toiled up the steep trail.

We finally ran the Presidente to earth in La Blanca. He was sorry, he said, but there were no oxcarts in the village. Oxen, yes, but no carts. We retraced our steps to La Calle. Yes, there were carts, but no oxen, said the villagers. "My God." I groaned to Ginger, "the truth isn't in them. How are we going to get to water?"

"Let's unhitch the oxen and let them feed and rest while we have our own supper," she suggested. "Maybe we'll have an inspiration."

Pancho refused to eat, and sat sulking through-out the meal. Both he and Porfirio were all for unloading their carts and returning at once to El Lombrado, leaving us to get out of our mess as best we could. This I refused to let them do; and this was the reason for Pancho's refusal to eat. Then I made Porfirio a tempting offer—one whole box of fish-hooks for himself if he would take us to Manguito. Yes, he would gladly do so, but he did not know the road. Pancho, hearing this, set up a wail, "Hasta Manguito?" ("As far as Manguito?")

We spent the intervening hours until midnight trying to find some one who knew the road. There were natives who knew it, but none that we could induce to go with us. Then the Presidente put in an appearance. In the morning there would be carts, but they would take us only to the next rancho, he said.

Of course, we could easily secure fresh teams at the rancho. "Nothing doing," I said to Ginger. "I've heard all the 'in the morning' stuff I ever want to listen to. There's just one thing to do—forget Manguito and try to get to Pampa Hondo. It's only six miles away."

Porfirio had never been to Pampa Hondo either. Surely the Señor did not mean to go that night? The Señor and Señora most emphatically did mean to go, I assured him. Pancho had said that the Presidente would be very angry if the oxen were not returned, at the latest, by the following day, and Porfirio had confirmed this. There was the possibility that he might ride over, or send some one to bring them back, by morning. Nevertheless, I ordered Porfirio to hitch the beasts to the carts. Then Pancho wailed that he and the oxen were too tired to make the trip. Personally, we hoped that he would stay in La Calle, I told him. After that he pulled himself together, and insisted that he be allowed to go to Pampa Hondo.

No two people agreed on the route, so I started off on a road which led in the general direction of the lagoon and let Porfirio follow with the equipment cart. It was bright moonlight, and the road was not difficult to follow. At the first rancho we stopped and woke up the rancher and asked for directions. We were on the right road. Pancho folded up once more and rode the balance of the way with Ginger on the equipment cart. At 3 A.M. we arrived at another rancho. The road had dwindled to a cart track by now, so the rancher's son saddled a horse to escort us the balance of the way. The brush was full of pinolillos, and our bodies became covered with them.

We arrived at Pampa Hondo at six o'clock in the morning, had breakfast, and immediately the men set out for La Calle. The next four hours Ginger and I spent in removing the pinolillos. These insects were a particularly vicious variety with hooked heads; when they were pulled out, the hooks remained underneath the skin and left a wicked sore. Ginger had picked up fewer of them because she had ridden most of the way on the cart, but my body was so swollen that I could hardly move.

The next seven days were a nightmare. I have often wondered since just how we managed to live through them. We assuredly would never have survived were it not that we had gradually built up an immunity to poisons, heat, thirst, hunger and fatigue.

Pampa Hondo was a small body of water just a mile and a half long, and its only outlet was a narrow channel running through a cerrado that made our two previous mangrove swamps seem child's play. Day after day we cut our way through a ring of iron roots. There was not an inch of dry land in which to set up camp. Since we had no opportunity to distill water we carefully rationed out what we had—a pint a day apiece. The growth was full of ants, spiders, and caterpillars, and these, added to the mosquitoes, made our lives miserable. Our bodies were a solid mass of sores, welts, bruises, and insects bites. The pain was intense.

On the seventh day the channel led through a particularly heavy grove of young mangroves. We were entirely out of food and water, and so weakened by hunger, thirst, and pain that each bodily movement was a separate act of sheer will. Slowly we crept forward, a few feet at a time, tunnelling our way through the barricade. How much longer we could keep it up was only a matter of hours. The charts gave our position as a few miles north of a considerable body of open water, but distances, measured in miles meant nothing and the charts might not

be accurate. We had been averaging less than four miles a day.

Then at sundown we reached the lagoon. Our relief was so great that we could hardly contain ourselves; it was a new lease on life. Ginger scooped up a handful of water and tasted it; it was clean and salt. Piling over the side of the canoe, we let it cleanse and soothe our tired, burning bodies.

We beached and unloaded near a coco-nut grove. Since my body was too swollen and sore to allow me to climb a tree, we both worked at chopping one down. Then we feasted on the crisp white palm heart, and drank the cool, refreshing milk.

After a night and a day of alternately resting, eating, drinking, and soaking ourselves in the lagoon, we started off in search of the village of Manguito. It was located, we knew, on one of the dozens of channels that threaded the numerous islands, but which one was a problem. We paddled for hours through the maze of lagoons; and had just about decided to give up the search for the time being when we saw a faint glimmer of light ahead. A little farther on the glow of cooking fires came into view.

Our arrival occasioned a great deal of excitement. The natives had heard of us, via the grapevine telegraph, and knew that we were attempting to pass through the cerrado, but that we should have succeeded seemed to them—as it did to us—in the nature of a miracle. The frightful condition of our bodies, more than anything we said, convinced them.

One of the women took Ginger in her arms. "Poor little one, you are very tired. Come with me."

She took us to her hut, which was one of the largest in the village. Here we rested, while the good Señora Lencha prepared the evening meal, the first hot food we had eaten in eight days. Never had food tasted so good. For dessert we were given a hard, brown confection that looked like a cookie and was delicious. They were called *tureletas*, and were made with corn, eggs, and panela. Possibly they were a village specialty, for we found them nowhere else.

After the meal the natives kept talking among themselves about a bath and soap. Since we had spent most of the preceding night and half the day soaking in the lagoon, we were puzzled; our clothes and our persons were clean. Then they explained that they were worried about the multitude of little caterpillar hairs that still stuck to our skins. If the "hairs of the little worms" were not promptly removed, they said, our skins would rot away, and we would die. They never entered the cerrado because of these worms; no, not even for one hundred pesos would they go ten feet. They finally proposed that we allow them to give us a bath.

The women led Ginger in one direction, while the men took me to another part of the lagoon. Then with a great deal of merriment (not shared by us) they proceeded to give us a scrubdown that we will remember to the end of our days. A tar-and-feathering would be preferable any day. But this was not all. There was more whispered conversation. Several natives dashed away and returned, after which an old man motioned me to follow him.

He led me to a hut where an olla filled with some peculiar, evil-smelling liquid simmered over the fire and asked me to remove my clothes. "Oh, Lord," I groaned, "what's coming now?" Dipping his hands in the olla, he smeared me from head to toe with the mess, which seemed to be a mixture of coco-nut oil and herbs; he even rubbed the stuff in my hair. I smelled like ten thousand polecats. When he had finished I reached for my clothes, but he shook his head. Washing was not enough, he said, the clothes had to be boiled to remove the hairs. He handed me a large

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The Black Legend

By Carlos Davila

IN THIS TWENTIETH CENTURY when propaganda is enslaving independent writers everywhere, it becomes easier to understand what the Black Legend was and what it did. The Legend's success must be the envy of modern publicity agencies. But there is one notable difference. Modern publicity generally serves the wordly interests of powerful elements and mobilizes opinion for immediate results measured in dollars and cents, with no thought of future historians. By contrast, the Black Legend was a false keystone of history for almost three centuries. And it is still latent in contemporary corollaries not unconnected with certain prevalent generalizations concerning the limitations and weaknesses of Latin Americans.

To get an idea of a present-day version of the Black Legend, imagine the history of the United States for the next three centuries written exclusively on the basis of what is published in "Pravda" or "Izvestia." Suppose "Tobacco Road" and "The Grapes of Wrath" were the only documents on how the North American people lived in the twentieth century. And picture the whole history of race relations in this country reduced to a single animated cartoon—which Disney has not produced—graphically perpetuating the story of lynching.

This distortion of the truth could not be more grotesque. Yet it would not be very different from what the Black Legend did to the Conquest and the colonial period in Spanish America. The Moscow papers and the works of Caldwell and Steinbeck would occupy the same position as the "Brevisima Historia de la Destrucción de las Indias" (Very Brief History of the Destruction of the Indies) published by Father Bartolomé de las Casas in 1552 and the "Historia del Nuevo Mundo" (History of the New World) in which, about the same time, Jerónimo Benzoni narrated the massacre of the Huguenots by the Spaniards in Florida. The Disney picture would be the equivalent of

the seventeen hair-raising drawings with which the Flemish emigrant Teodoro de Bry illustrated the 1597 Frankfort edition of Las Casas, book.

The Black Legend came down to my generation as a convenient, liberal, erudite, and sinister dogma. My first doubts cropped up when, already getting along in years, I began to reflect on history as it appeared in popular texts. These were not the only doubts; our day has been fertile in the correction of history. The Century of Augustus, so glowingly described by the panegyrists, loses much of its glitter when one learns of the crimes on which it was built and the decadence it started. Pericles is no longer as they taught me, when we know that he was the one who provoked the Peloponnesian Wars that brought on the fall of Greece. And when we read the 61 articles of the Magna Carta, we cannot help but admire the persuasive powers of those who convinced us that **that code of feudal privileges was the cradle of modern civil liberty**...

It all depends, it would seem, on who writes the history and who teaches it. An erudite Arab friend of mine once told me that in the Black Legend Spain had got a taste of her own medicine—the sort she applied to the war-torn centuries that culminated in the expulsion of the Moors from the Peninsula. "Spaniards wrote the history," he said, "and they called it 'The Reconquest.' If we Arabs had written it, it would have been known as 'The Barbarian Invasion,' or something of that sort."

And what about the most widespread and lasting legend of our own day—the myth of this materialistic, imperialistic "octopus of the North," blinded by egoism and deaf to everything but making money? That is what is said everywhere of the generous, spiritual, and sentimental people of the United States—perhaps the kindest of all peoples, whatever foreign policy its leaders may impose upon it.

Latin America, of course, was not immune to the



Reproduction of one of the gruesome drawings by de Bry that embellished Father de las Casas' tales of torture during Spanish conquest.

lure of this fable. The classic of this school was José Enrique Rodó's "Ariel." With its basic dogma that Latin America had a monopoly of "spiritual" culture in this hemisphere while the United States was devoured by the most crass materialism, it became the manual of our intellectuals. Though it seems hard to believe, this doctrine was a cliché of Latin American literature for half a century. "Yankee imperialism" was another. At the same time, in the United States the idea prevailed that the English-speaking peoples were superior and had a "manifest destiny" to conquer the inferior nations, beginning in this continent with the peoples reduced to inferiority by the Black Legend. Considering this historical background, the remarkable thing is not that Pan Americanism should have languished, but that it should have survived at all.

Father Las Casas' book completely achieved its objective, which was to influence the Crown to adopt a policy of protecting the natives. But it paid for its victory in the hard coin of loss of the Spanish Empire's prestige. Actually, the Crown never had any other policy toward the Indians. One of the Legend's fundamental points was that the Madrid Government cast aside Las Casas' policy of "persuasion" in favor of the "repressive" course advocated by Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda in his book "Tratado sobre las justas causas de las guerras contra los Indios" (Treatise on the just causes of the wars against the Indians). Historical research shows that the Crown rejected Sepúlveda's thesis and banned his book by royal decree in 1550.

Although Las Casas' work had an evangelical quality, it was really a generalization based on a few isolated incidents. The angry pen of the Bishop of Chiapas made them a symbol of the whole Spanish system in America. All the Indians were good, pure "sons of princes and gentlemen," while the Spaniards were all "cruel wolves and tigers" who "left no children, nor old men, nor newly delivered women, nor pregnant ones, without disembowelling them." Written in 1542, though published ten years later, this work covered the first forty years of Spanish rule in America. It included tales of territories Las Casas never saw, of which he could have known little. The apostolic monk finally died in 1566, at the age of 92, insisting that the things he described had not changed. His book became the cornerstone of the history of the Spanish Monarchy, the Catholic Church, and the Spanish-American colonial administration.

What better ammunition could the Flemish have hoped for in their struggle with Spain in those years—a contest in which the Flemish had the sympathy of all the liberal elements in Europe? Twenty-six years after it appeared in Spanish, a French edition was published. It bore macabre titles, very different from those in the original version. This note testified to its purpose: "To serve as an example and a warning to the seventeen Provinces of the Low Countries." The Spain of the Duke of Alba and Don Juan of Austria that the Flemish patriots were fighting was this same one that was indulging in ferocious massacre in America.

While the War of Flanders went on, editions poured forth in all languages. From the hands of the Flemish patriots this weapon of the Black Legend passed to those of the Reformation during the religious wars. Later the Encyclopedists and rationalists who paved the way for the French Revolution took it up. It served the anti-Catholic Jacobinism of the era perfectly, and the liberal movements of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries everywhere adopted it. The proclamations, harangues, and constitutional documents of the Latin American independence movement were full of it. We find it in the Letter to the Span-

iards in America by the Jesuit Don Juan Pablo Viscardo. It inspired Francisco Miranda, the Liberator Simón Bolívar, and all the leaders of the Spanish American Revolution. It passed intact into all the school textbooks of the new republics and filled all their national anthems with heroic hate.

Many other chroniclers and monks had denounced the excesses that Las Casas related, but it was his book and the terrifying illustrations by Teodoro de Bry that permeated all the encyclopedias and dictionaries, history books, reference works, textbooks, travel narratives, and even popular poetry for three centuries.

In the year of United States independence, 1776, the Black Legend was still being endorsed—this time by a supplement to Diderot and D'Alembert's Encyclopedie. Marmontel, Raynal, Buckle, Macaulay, Guizot, and a whole host of historians followed or accepted it. Meanwhile, De Bry's drawings were working their way into the minds of the people. Like a "comic strip," they entered through the eyes of those who did not read the fearful saga of Spain in America. It was not strange, then, for my fellow countryman Francisco Bilbao to write in 1864 that progress consisted in "despañolizar a los pueblos" ("de-hispanicizing the peoples").

Truly, the Black Legend was as effective against Spain as powerful armies and fleets in the implacable struggle for world domination between the great powers of those centuries.

It was undoubtedly the immense and respectable personality of Father Las Casas that gave weight and substance to this myth—the figure of the "defender of the Americans' freedom," the new St. Paul, "the father of the Indians," the conqueror, "the holy man who, to free the Indians from servitude, brought the African slaves to this continent."

Centuries passed before historical criticism ventured to question this apostle's generalizations or cast doubt on the veracity of his writings. Timidly, the critics began to insinuate that the "exaggerations should be removed." Menéndez y Pelayo was one of the first to speak of Las Casas' "cholerie" nature, his "crude fanaticism," and "brutal insults" that made charity itself "acquire a bitter taste as it passed through his lips." Juderías, Carlos Pereira, Bourne, and Bayle, among others, carried off some bits of the curtain that some colonial writers had already pulled loose. In our own time, Rómulo D. Carbia, Doctor of American History and professor in the University of Buenos Aires and La Plata, gathered together all corrective proof in his definitive "Historia de la Leyenda Negra Hispano Americana" (History of the Spanish American Black Legend.)

We can see now the blemishes that marred the conquest and the colonial administration, but we can also see the brighter background. All in all, the Black Legend prevailed almost without opposition for three hundred years, spreading the idea of a barbarous conquest followed by a colonial regime characterized by cruelty, obscurantism, misery, inexorable exploitation, political ineptness, inefficient administration, and complete lack of enlightenment.

Due to the Black Legend's influence, colonial institutions were automatically condemned. Historical analysis far from justifies this conclusion. Just look at the "New Laws" that came into effect long before the publication of Las Casas' book. The "Recopilación de Indias" (Code of the Indies) of 1680 and the tremendous volume of royal decrees show that the code of law that ruled Spanish America was the equal, if not the superior, of those in any other part of the civilized world. In this legislation there

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End of the Oxcart Trail

By Neill James

MIAHUATLAN, situated on a plateau rimmed by distant hills at an altitude of 3,600 feet is indeed at the end of the oxcart trail. Older than Ejutla, the population of Miahuatlan was 90 per cent pure Indian.

"At one time more wealthy Indians lived in and around Miahuatlan than in any other place in the Republic," said Octavio as we bumped along. "You will see white Indians." Octavio wove a halo of glamour about our destination.

At last we arrived, climbed stiffly down from the truck and began looking for lodgings. Good roads, tourists, and hotels go together; none had come to Miahuatlan. We chose a small hotel, once the private home of a wealthy Indian, because it had a bath. Windows facing the street had been bricked during the last revolution. A small skylight let in daylight. Ventilation was via the door which opened on the patio. In rural Mexico people sleep sealed in stuffy rooms.

Miahuatlan, with 7,000 population, was distinctly Indian in character. Transportation was principally on foot, by burro or horse. Saddle horses stamped at hitching posts. Burro caravans laden with coffee, wood, copra, castor beans, corn, nuts, fruits and hides passed. Barefoot women wore long skirts. This was the daily street scene of Miahuatlan. It was as if the Wind of Chance had flipped back a page in the book of Time.

While Octavio was occupied with business affairs, we became acquainted with the town, especially with the swift little rivulet a block below our hotel where the activity of the pueblo centered. Women came to bathe themselves and their children. They scrubbed the family laundry on the rocks, and spread it upon the

sand to dry. Early in the morning burros laden with produce for the market forded the streamlet, splashed bellydeep through the icy water. At eventide they returned laden with lighter, less bulky store-bought necessities.

The mystery race of white Indians was no enigma. A number of blue-eyed Germans owned coffee fincas in the surrounding district. The real mystery was how untutored aborigines ever became wealthy in dealing with astute Nordics. Certainly, the last person one would expect to encounter in the ranks of the *neuve riche* would be the man who travels on foot, driving a burro; Octavio explained.

"Germans on remote fincas in the mountains cultivate coffee. Hardy burro owners cornered the transport of coffee beans and got rich."

I was delighted to learn of an Indian cornering a market. I inquired further about these "rich" Indians. In rural Mexico the patient, tough little burro (I bought one for 10 pesos) is the principal mode of transportation. The unit of measurement for produce is the quantity a single burro can carry, i.e., a *carga*. The rate for transporting a *carga* (220 pounds) from plantation to Miahuatlan was 5 pesos. The secret of financial success lay in the infinitesimal overhead—food for burro and man—and the fact that the panniers were filled with store bought necessities on the return journey. Thus a faithful burro earned the equivalent of his value in one round trip. The owner earned 1,200 pesos a month, a fabulous sum for a worker. His needs remained static. When he accumulated 2,000 pesos or 3,000 pesos he cashed the silver pesos in his back yard, and his interest in the arduous transportation waned. He went into business for himself, buying and selling coffee. With a capitalist's



Tempera.

By Salvador Conde.

eyevue of coffee transportation, he now clamored for lower carrying rates. An Indian is no different from the remainder of civilized mankind.

Quiet Miahuatlan has experienced its quota of earthquakes and revolutions. The violent quake of 1928 which damaged Oaxaca City, extended over the Miahuatlan area.

Octavio's money was an increasing problem. He was literally embarrassed by accumulation of the precious metal. He bought all raw materials available, yet his intake continued to exceed the amount paid out. Soon the money-satchel bulged and could not be fastened. He tied a string around it. By the third day he had an additional money bag a foot high filled with heavy silver pesos. When he went abroad to transact business, he left the money on the table. The maid dusted around it, and the money remained undisturbed in his unlocked room.

People of remote communities are frequently fanatically religious, due in part to the human being's desperate need for diversion. Octavio said Miahuatlan was not a religious town. The law designed to curb the power of the church forbade religious processions. Came the feast day of the patron saint and police shut both eyes to regulations. A procession, headed by the padre, emerged into the street. A representation of the Virgin and Child, surrounded by young girls in white, rode in a decorated truck. Women carrying, balanced upon their heads, baskets filled with flowers banked around trinkets such as crosses, doves of peace, pictures of the patron saint, holy candles and a variety of religious objects, accompanied by children carrying banners, walked before and after the Virgin and Child. Five hundred villagers trailed after the gala section of the procession. I followed, mistakenly thinking it was headed for the cemetery. Instead the parade wound purposefully through the narrow streets, down a long dirt road flanked by fences and cactus. For three hours I marched, shoe mouth deep in dust, perspiring beneath a relentless sun. We took the patron saint out to see for himself the condition of crops, and to visit a nearby village. Without stopping to rest, we returned him to the large Franciscan church in Miahuatlan. My curiosity was more than satisfied. I am cured of joining passing parades to see where they are going!

My next adventure was in a temescal. I have a fondness for thermal baths, a deep interest in racial bathing customs. I sought the temescal. Marta accompanied me. The temescal was situated in a fragrant garden surrounded by bananas, coffee plants, flowering orange trees and pomegranates. Beehives were set among the hibiscus, cosmos and tall dahlias. Luckily we arrived on bath day. The fire was already burning and customers waited in an ante-room. The woman in charge permitted a quick preview of the bath. She opened a small door just large enough for a body to crawl through. A blast of heat struck me in the face. The principle was the same as used in the vapor baths in Finland. Cold water was poured upon hot stones to create necessary steam. However, the sauna, Finish bath, with its scrubbed shelves to lie upon, graduated as to temperature, was more refined than the Zapotecan bath.

"Go home and bring two towels and a sheet, pronto. The bath is waiting." So the woman in charge ordered.

It was siesta time when we arrived with our towels and sheets, and hurried down the shady walk flanked by beehives and cosmos. We were careful not to confuse the bees.

The temescal, though a satisfactory steam bath, is reserved for medicinal purposes. Of the six Indian women seated against the wall in the shade of orange trees, two had newborn babies with them, two were

patients accompanied by midwives. They looked questioningly at the two foreign women. The bath attendant called to us to enter the ante-room and undress. La bañera, a toothless hag who could not have been a day less than three-quarters of a century, opened the entrance to the hot dungeon, crawled within, undressed, and tossed her clothing out. Midwives bound pregnant patients, tying a reboso tightly about breasts and another about the abdomen. One by one we crawled on all fours through the oven-like door, stretched nude, each on a separate petate on the earth floor, and passed our sheets through the door to a young attendant. At last we were lying in a row in the dark, perspiring. I was horrified to see the single ray of light suddenly cut off, and to hear the door locked from without.

"Suppose the attendant should go away and forget about us," I whispered to Marta. The very thought made us shiver despite the heat. "Sh-h-h. What's that?" Somebody was praying.

This bath was a ritual, and there followed a strange ceremony. Only cat eyes could have witnessed it in the inky blackness. The voice of the old bañera came from above us, a soft, low incantation. The nude old woman, stooping before a pail of cold water, communed with the gods before sprinkling the hot-rock wall. A hissing splutter, and a wave of steam rolled over us, followed by another, and another. Perspiration oozed from every pore, coursing in rivulets into the earth. After communing with her own tribal god, the bañera did not neglect her Christian God, to whom she prayed for mercy, alleviation of illness, escape from risks and accidents, and finally asked for a blanket blessing upon us all. "La Magnifica" was really a beautiful prayer in Zapotecan. The steam became absolutely unbearable; I felt a sharp whack upon my buttocks, then over my body. The old bañera, wielding a bundle of romero twigs dipped in cold water, stepped over us, lashing each as she went. It was an unique sensation, the extremes of heat and cold upon sensitive skin. Just when I became convinced that heat was preferable to being unexpectedly lashed in the dark, the old hag began anew her incantations, sprinkling more water on the hot rock. Then I knew I preferred lashings to steam. I inched along until my face was off the petate, and buried my nose in the earth. As heat increased, even this relief faded. I dragged my body forward until I could press my nose against the crack in the door. Prayers continued, steam increased. I thought of various shellfish I had seen steamed alive, and remembered the horrible scratching sound against the iron lid, the death struggles of crabs trapped in a steam-filled pot. While my errant mind wandered, the instinct of self-preservation seized me. Away with pride and crabs!

I pounded upon the door. No answer. Wild panic swept over me. We were locked in. Like crabs in a pot! The attendant had gone for a siesta! Hugging the damp earth, my nose against the crack, I pounded with both fists against the door. After an age, the door opened. I thrust my dripping head through the crack. A hand covered my face, pushed my head firmly back, closed and locked the door. My heart fluttered. I breathed a little personal prayer on my own. With a shock I realized that we were Christians all! The bañera had been in touch with the same God. There was a difference, however. Her prayer was a ritual, mine was in dead earnest!

A quarter of an hour passed. I pictured my limp, lobstered body and heard friends say, "Just like her to go poking around in a steam room and suffocate!"

I ceased to care. The lock turned. I saw a beam of light. Old instinct was on the job. I thrust my

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NUDE. OIL.

By Rodolfo Segovia.

Rodolfo Segovia

By Enrique Asunsolo

AN avocation is often mistaken for a vocation. The former at times manifests itself earlier in a man's life than the latter; but a vocation—an authentic calling—is so compelling that it can change the course of one's activities.

Rodolfo Segovia, dental surgeon by profession, has always been a devotee of fine arts. He tried his hand at letters and the theatre, without finding his road. Some years ago he perceived that painting was his veritable vocation.

I do not believe that self-taught painters exist at this time. There are those who have not attended schools or academies, or followed disciplined programs; but masters, old or modern, surround us continuously, imparting their teaching. One learns from them always, and some times one even resorts to emulating them. There are text-books on painting which might teach one a little, and there are painters in our midst who some times, when they are not too

selfish, are willing to give us advice from their experience.

The painter who makes of his art a profession must surrender himself to the public market tastes. The painter who does not live from the proceeds of his art can enjoy the enormous privilege of being sincere with himself, and thus with all others. Segovia paints what he wants, and not being forced to set a time limit on his work, paints as well as he can. The themes of his pictures are imposed solely by his own plastic vision: some objects of glass in the light of an eclipse, an atrium of a village church, a clown amid circus tents in the moonlight, a woman warrior clasp ing a rifle... The motives which stir his emotions are highly varied, but their importance is in the plastic quality he achieves in their interpretation.

In his initial public exhibition, which is currently offered at the Galería Arte Moderno, Segovia has surprised our amateurs, our experts, and ever our professionals.



PORTRAIT. Oil.

By Rodolfo Segovia.



PEPPER TREE. Oil.

By Rodolfo Segovia.



STUDY FOR THE BEACH OF MOCAMBO. Tempera.
By Rodolfo Segovia.



STILL LIFE. OIL.

By Rodolfo Segovia.



WATERING PLACE. OIL.

By Rodolfo Segovia.

DAY OF EXPIATION. OIL.

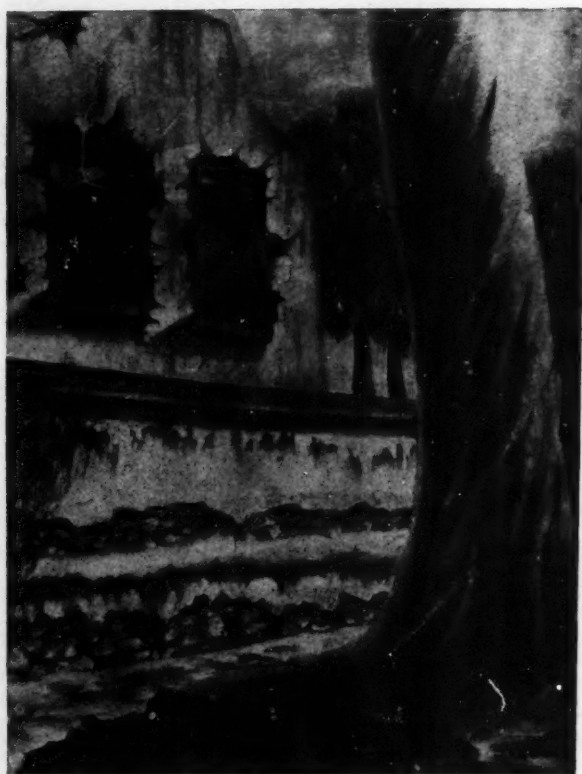
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TORSO. OIL.

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Un Poco de Todo

REVOLT REFLECTS SOUTH AMERICAN ILLS

ANOTHER political uprising followed by a state of siege in Bolivia has resulted in an estimated fifty a hundred deaths and has exposed once again the underlying challenge to the tranquility of South America.

With the cold war tending to make the United States security-conscious below the Panama Canal as well as above, and with authorities in La Paz insisting that the latest coup was Communist-inspired, it is opportune to consider just how much unrest there is in the ten republics below the isthmus.

If "unrest" is to be taken in terms of long-standing poverty, disease and ignorance, then it is potential in some degree in all of the countries except Uruguay and Argentina. There are 105,295,000 people in South America, and without any doubt, at least 50,000,000, and possibly 75,000,000 of them, live under political conditions which are subject to recurrent upheavals. But if "unrest" is defined more broadly, to include purely political conflict or factionalism, it will be found to take in certainly Argentina and even Uruguay—where everyone is literally born into one of two traditional parties.

Thus, the basic economic factor of South American unrest is complicated by sheer politics—by the tradition of plots and revolutions, of army revolts and military juntas. Since the Petropolis conference of August, 1948, presidents have been forcibly unseated in Peru, Venezuela and Paraguay; there have been hundreds of deaths resulting from conflicts in Colombia and Bolivia; and recurrent charges of conspiracy, Communist or otherwise, in Chile, Argentina and Brazil. Apart from Uruguay, Ecuador seems to have fared best. But its President fell during the brief civil war which broke out while the Petropolis conference was actually in session.

There is a direct though varying relationship in South America between the sternness of nature and the brooding volatility of millions of Latins. In vast regions of the continent food is always scarce. Even in lush Brazil there are tracts where malnutrition is among the worst in the hemisphere. The Bolivian case is classic. Not only is the country's geography fantastic and perilous, its food supply difficult and much of its population illiterate, remote and given to sudden outbursts of savage violence, but its economy is geared to one "crop"—tin. And fluctuations in the world market for that metal are swiftly felt throughout the country.

The relative stability of Uruguay is becoming a classic anomaly in South America, largely because its geography is gentle, its climate mild, its food supply secure and its economy not dependent on any one product.

And everything is not gloomy elsewhere, thanks to other factors working against unrest.

Here there is a wide range of economic, technical and sanitary assistance, both by the United States direct and by various agencies of the Pan American and United Nations systems.

The United States, through the Export-Import Bank, has helped out Chile when the copper price has fallen and has helped Brazil to build the Volta Redonda steel plant, greatest on the continent.

In Argentina one will hear much talk of the new \$125,000,000 credit to enable President Juan D. Perón

to clear up commercial arrears and put the country's naturally endowed economy on a smoother working basis. But in this instance one will also hear much complaint that the United States at the same time is helping to "bail out" a wasteful dictatorial regime.

And this makes the important point that in Latin America, a measure calculated by some to alleviate unrest, or increase harmony, may strike others as doing precisely the opposite.

But most of the United States aid has been genuinely helpful. Moreover, there have been notable instances of self-help, such as literary campaigns and public health measures. The Colorados and the Blancos of Uruguay have proved, on purely political terms, that it is possible to oppose each without bloodshed.

What seems to worry the United States most these days is that the continent or key parts of it might go over to the Communist side.

It is a fact that there are still large, legal, active Communist parties in Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay. And there exists what appears to be international Communist agitation, though less readily identifiable or measurable, in Chile, Bolivia, Venezuela and possibly Ecuador. The United States, with the cooperation of the individual governments, has its eyes on what seems to be the worst danger spots. But the over-all threat is not one that can be coped with in terms of Moscow ideology or even elementary Marxism.

The Bogota uprising of April, 1948, proved once and for all that what might be called the "potential for revolt" of large sections of the Latin American population will continue to sputter along, and that a detonation does not have to have the slightest connection with communism. Once it explodes, count on Communist exploitation—and where known Communists, to say nothing of secret agents, are numbered in the thousands, that can be an extremely serious business.

But the gap between the masses of this continent and the Kremlin is vast and unbridgeable by an ideology or even by an understanding. On the other hand, it is bridgeable by circumstances related to the black triangle of poverty, ignorance and disease; and it is to help smash that triangle that any long-range United States policy here will have to be devoted. Otherwise, even though South America does not go Communist, her fundamental plight will continue to be symbolized by revolution.

LURE OF CATHAY

England's first contacts with the Russians, recalled by Shakespeare, are closely related to American history. English explorers, seeking a Northeast Passage to China, encountered the Russians; other English explorers, seeking a Northwest Passage to China, encountered the vast North American Continent. The opening of Russia to Western trade and the settlement of North America were byproducts of the same urge of Western Europe to exploit the trade of the Far East. Four centuries later England finds herself in the center of two worlds she helped to bring into being—an aggressive, expanding Russia and a powerful America. The China trade still eludes her.

Literary Appraisals

WAIT FOR TOMORROW. By Robert Wilder. 406 pp. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.

INVOLVED in "Wait for Tomorrow" is some sharply focused looking at today. The view is limited and not at all pretty. Sex and a kind of ruthless, indulgent self-interest are the objects in the foreground. Beyond them is only a lurid mist.

The events of the novel rise out of the efforts of an ex-king, his mistress, his major-domo (conveniently married to the mistress), and his financial adviser to enter the United States. Collaboration with Nazis and flight from Europe are the background distinctions of this quartet. After the war, in Mexico City—where most of the book's action takes place—they live in luxurious corruption, planning to move north with the aid of a powerful American oilman.

The point-of-view character, a New York reporter, capable, cynical, amoral, lines up with this juicy crew as a public-relations handyman, partly because the pay is good and partly because of what seems an appropriate disillusionment about a girl who committed suicide in a Fifty-fourth Street apartment some days after he had spent a casual night there with her.

This central character is a considerable fellow. A number of people who know him count him a heel. He believes in nothing. "Man's integrity? Nuts." In one of his rare moments of reverie he dismisses all the values by which a great many people, however vaguely and ineffectually, steer their small lives. Yet he is ultimately transmogrified, this bleak bystander, into a valiant and honorable man who, at the last moment, foils the plot to get the dregs of European royalty into these United States—whose rocks and rills, woods and templed hills, apparently mean something to him after all, though he is careful to identify his action as "personal" rather than "moral."

In the main—and this is true of Mr. Wilder's other novels—it is the firm professional competence of the story-telling which makes this hard-boiled hero's switch acceptable and the whole book compelling. The characterizations are all simplified, occasionally even caricatured. Yet the resulting types are put into urgent motion by a straightforward prose which drives along swiftly and sturdily. And, over and above the narrative competence, there is a dark, fitful insight, a true if sometimes blurry sense of evil, which gives to the often melodramatic events a general validity—making them seem sharp, authentic revelations of one level of contemporary reality.

R S:

THE MIRACULOUS FISH OF DOMINGO GONZALEZ. By Martin M. Goldsmith Illustrated by William de la Torre. 208 pp. New York: W. W. Norton.

PRINCIPALLY this is the story of the change and havoc made in the Mexican fishing village of Puerto Miguel by an angel of progress in the guise of an American, one Mulligan, a buyer of shark-livers and forerunner of such marks of civilization as cola drinks, permanents, neon signs and motor scooters. Mulligan makes gold from the heretofore useless sharks. Everyone loves him, except the village padre and the people who are being dispossessed because more room is needed for his business expansion.

Domingo Gonzalez, however, is indifferent to the great man. A lifetime of bad luck has not been chang-

ed by Mulligan's advent. In pre-Mulligan days, Domingo had caught sharks while others caught tuna and pargo; now he catches food-fish while sharks avoid his nets as though equipped with radar. Meantime, Domingo continues in debt and thinks of desperate solutions, such as marrying the grocer's daughter.

A rival company is set up in the neighboring village of Santa Clara; meanwhile the quixotic administration of the National Railways decrees that whichever village achieves the greatest vitamin potential by a certain date will be made the terminal for a new railroad spur. Great is the rivalry, and when on the last day it seems that Santa Clara is going to win, behold, Domingo Gonzales comes into port towing the carcass of the great-grandfather of all sharks.

Domingo becomes the village hero and is appointed station-master of the non-existing station. Meantime, various people, especially the local padre, have been praying that the progress of civilization might be halted. And the son of the about-to-be-dispossessed grocer has been investigating the Inside of Mulligan's vitameter. Tested, the enormous liver registers no vitamin potential. Whereupon the railroad goes to Santa Clara, Mulligan leaves town, the new refrigerators and cars are repossessed, the grocer's daughter marries the young lawyer who came to do the dispossessing, and Domingo Gonzales reverts to his ancient status as village ne'er-do-well.

Anyone attempting the light touch these days deserves an A for effort. Martin Goldsmith's characters bob up and down like those of a Punch-and-Judy show. Although it is possible for the two-dimensional characters of such a show to achieve either allegory or, at worst, slapstick, Mr. Goldsmith's do neither. There are amusing lines, but as a whole the book achieves little meaning or humor.

H. S.

EVERY INCH A KING. A Biography of Dom Pedro I. First Emperor of Brazil. By Sergio Correa de Costa. Translated by Samuel Putnam. 230 pp. New York: The Macmillan Company.

DOM PEDRO should have been a folk legend. His life was a series of paradoxes. A royal prince, son of King John VI of Portugal, he was educated more by stable boys and street gangs than by courtiers and official tutors. He made himself Emperor of Brazil—though he was better at blacksmithing, cabinet-making, boxing and wrestling, musical composition and even poetry than he was at court ceremonial. In Latin America his promiseuity brought him renown as a great lover, yet his two royal wives were passionately devoted to him. He was forced to abdicate his throne for being too arbitrary, but he died, at 36, the victim of a war he successfully waged to restore liberal constitutional government to Portugal.

Dom Pedro's excessive "theatrical bravura," has prevented a real appreciation of his political usefulness and considerable historical importance, according to the author, Sergio Correa da Costa, Brazilian consul at Los Angeles.

Taken to Brazil in 1808 when the Lisbon royal family and court emigrated to that immensely rich colony to escape capture by Napoleon, Dom Pedro I grew up in the atmosphere of confused liberalism which preceded the wars for freedom of the Spanish-American republics. In 1822, at the age of 24, he freed Brazil essentially by a personal declaration of inde-

pendence, and proclaiming himself "emperor by acclamation of the people," he virtually forced a constitution on his crucial supporters among the Brazilian reactionary aristocracy.

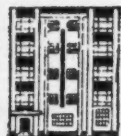
After that, Dom Pedro was, if possible, even more deeply in the black books of the Austrian Prime Minister, Metternich, and the courts of the European Holy Alliance powers than were the quarreling caudillo Presidents of the new Spanish-American republics.

Metternichean intrigues, consequently, played a part in the series of political crises which led to the loss of Dom Pedro's Brazilian throne in 1831, and they later figured in the Portuguese civil war of 1832-34, in which the dethroned emperor defeated the efforts of his brother Dom Miguel to restore legitimacy to the Portuguese crown. Doubtless Pedro's impulsive qualities would have made it difficult for him to govern successfully as a constitutional monarch in either kingdom, but while he was at it he gave impressive proofs of romantically good intentions and, intermittently, of remarkable skill in practical politics.

Senhor da Costa tells his story with high emotional gusto. Unfortunately, he leaves us in considerable dark as to what really made His Majesty tick.

D. A.

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SUN IN THE SKY: The Civilization of the American Indian. By Walter Collins O'Kane. Illustrated. 250 pp. Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press.

W ALTER O'KANE, author and for many years Professor of Economic Entomology at the University of New Hampshire, sometimes spends a summer with Indian friends in the stone villages of the Hopis, on their mesas seventy miles from Winslow, Ariz. The following is a typically revealing conversation that occurs in his companionable book about the Hopis, "Sun in the Sky":

"My father," said an elderly Hopi to me, "always saved the little ears of corn for seed—the short ones. That is the old Hopi way. But a man told us to choose the longest and biggest ones. So last year I tried that."

"Was it any better?" I asked.

"Oh, it was all right. Both ways were all right."

The town-dwelling Indians of the Southwest generally have this good humor and tolerance. The point is that they don't believe the size of the seed, or the fields, or the plows, make all the difference. It is

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FROM OLDEN TIMES...

Piza 1902

"Cana al Aire" PIZA 1902

one's attitude that counts most. Mr. O'Kane in an unobtrusive way shows how characteristic it is of the Hopis to try to think the right thoughts.

The Hopi villages are ancient: old Oraibi is known to have existed before 1150 A. D. And prayer is the essence pervading the Hopis' religious heritage. One considers the secret of a long-lived civilization as the author describes such forms of Hopi prayer as planting and harvest, pottery making, the dance, and above all home-making. "To every Hopi a house is a spiritual as well as a temporal shelter." They themselves feel that their success with the fundamental problem of the individual and the community comes from the punctilious observance of ritual.

In this connection, I was interested by the way they bring up their children. The problem-child does not appear to exist. As early as possible, the elders identify the young lives with their own, passing on to them their faith, their fears and hopes.

The antiquity of the high-perched villages, their strangeness and beauty, and the spectacular snake-dance lead many popular writers to treat them picturesque or sensationally. Mr. O'Kane avoids these pitfalls. He writes as a field naturalist, participating objectively in the life he describes, and responding to its charm. He succeeds admirably in passing that charm on to the reader.

H. L.

THE OUTSIDER. By Ernesto Sabato. Translated from the Spanish By Harriet de Onis. 171 pp. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

○ NE strong potion in T. S. Eliot's "The Cocktail Party" is the statement:

*** To men of a certain type

The suspicion that they are incapable of loving
Is as disturbing to their selfesteem.

As, in cruder men, the fear of impotence.

Ernesto Sabato's novella, already published in South America and in France under the sponsorship of the French novelist, Albert Camus, may be described as a case history in point. In it an Argentine painter, Juan Pablo Castel, from the vantage point of a cell, tells why and, incidentally, how he killed his mistress. The better half of the book is the first, in which Castel tracks down his victim and enumerates the obsessive hates and prejudices of his deranged yet sufficiently individualistic mind.

With such a protagonist, sympathy is virtually impossible to achieve; and the book must be judged, therefore, for its psychological insight or ability to

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maintain suspense and interest. Psychologically it succeeds wonderfully until the act of violence, where a sudden concern with sentimental love seemed, to this reader, to vitiate (and cheapen) the fused effect of lovelessness and impotence that the author had legitimately isolated.

B. V. W.

THE BREAST OF THE DOVE. By Herbet Gorman. 440 pp. New York: Rinehart & Co.

M R. GORMAN'S new novel tells of that great adventure, initiated by Napoleon III, which lifted the amiable and too gentle Maximilian and his beautiful wife, Carlota, from the comfortable shelter of Miramar and thrust them into a tense, trouble-torn Mexico, in the role of empire-builders. In a spirit of irony, he describes their tragedy through the eyes of the French captain, Balzane, persona grata at the Court and a fervent admirer of Carlota. The Yanqui, Sam Glib, diligencia driver, affords comic relief—while in the background, alive with revolutionary activity, lurks the menacing figure of Juarez, leader of the Mexican rebels. And in the not so remote distance, General Grant is putting an end of the Confederacy, thereby hastening the fate of the tragic Emperor.

Mr. Gorman clearly has done a great deal of research for this work, but happily he has not allowed his facts to clog the narrative.

J. S.

BARRACON. By Harry Hervey. 275 pp. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.

C HOOSING again an exotic milieu and a picturesque subject, Harry Hervey brings off another expertly constructed romantic novel. His setting is Portuguese Guinea in the Eighteen Fifties and his subject is a young woman's coming of age in the purgatory of an African slave factory.

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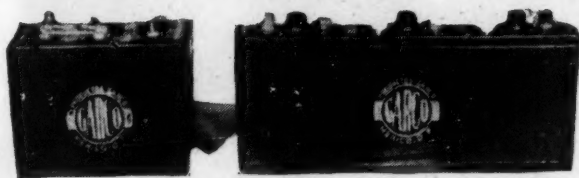
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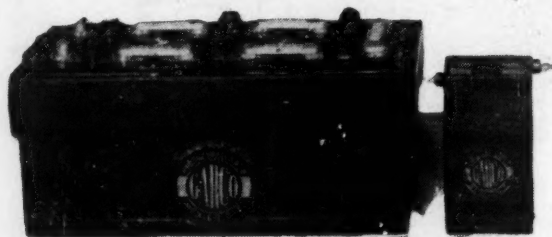
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A. A.

DON GAUCHO. By Alyce Pollock and Ruth Goode. 370 pp. New York: Whittlesey House.

ARGENTINA during the early Eighteen Hundreds is the background of this sprawling romance. Don Miguel (nicknamed Don Gaucho after he and his cowboys save Buenos Aires from a British invasion) falls in love with a fiery daughter of the pampas. For a while he finds it hard to reconcile his love with his aristocratic background. Several revolutions in which he discovers the obvious moral superiority of the gaucho to the merchant soldier of Buenos Aires hasten the process. Flights, ambushes, duels, executions and pitched battles follow one another in a pell-mell fashion. Although their portrayal of character is rudimentary, the authors show great feeling for the life of the pampas with all its disorder, color and earthy richness.

J. S.

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Current Attractions

By Vane C. Dalton

SYMPHONY

THE season of twelve symphony concerts by the new Philharmonic Orchestra of Mexico City which was presented at the Palacio Chino, terminated this month with an all Beethoven program conducted by Rafael Kubelik. The audience of two thousand was visibly moved when the orchestra concluded the final program with the traditional rendition of Las Golondrinas, thus voicing its farewell and gratitude for the successful culmination of a season which must be classed as a daring experiment.

The success of its initial season augurs well for the future of this orchestra. It has demonstrated to a quite impressive degree this ensemble's ability to execute difficult and varied programs, if not in a brilliant at least in a quite adequate manner, as well as the enthusiastic responsiveness of a numerous public which made the perilous venture financially possible. Serving as a test, this season has undoubtedly placed this orchestra on a firm footing.

The final program, with Claudio Arrau as soloist, was especially pleasing. This notable Chilean pianist, who has performed here on numerous occasions and is widely admired in our musical midst, rendered the most beautiful of all Beethoven's concertos, the third and the fifth, with an immaculate pulchritude and superb musicianship. It must be said, in all fairness, that the orchestra's performance did not

fully match the excellence of Arrau. Much as in these two concertos, there was in the performance of the "Eroica" symphony a considerable faultiness among the wind instruments, and in some passages the string components failed to achieve complete unison.

These shortcomings, however, were generously overlooked by the public, which, like myself, probably felt that they were fully offset by the deep earnestness of the musicians who were striving to do their very best handicapped by insufficient preparation and under the guidance of a conductor whose baton did not always clearly articulate his purpose.

I am inclined to believe that by and large the components of this orchestra comprise the best symphony talent in the city. It is therefore lamentable that it lacks a permanent director. The public approval it received and the experience it acquired during this season should prove of great value in its future development; though I seriously doubt if in its acephalous existence, and performing entirely under guest conductors, it will achieve the degree of perfection that may give it the position of local preeminence it seeks. For obvious reasons the post of a permanent director must be filled by a Mexican; and though we have a number of young musicians who occasionally wield a baton, I cannot think of any particular one whose prestige and experience are sufficiently ample for the job.



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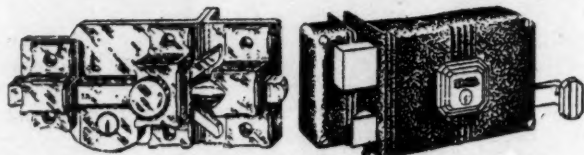
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Friederich Weismann and Heinz Unger have been engaged as guest conductors for the pending concert season by the University Symphony Orchestra. Julian Carrillo, the veteran Mexican conductor and composer, author of the much disputed musical theory "Sonido 13," is also to conduct some of the programs. Shura Cherkasky, pianist; Henry Szering, violinist; Adolf Odnoposoff, cellist, and Robert Vaska, violinist, will perform as soloists during the season which begins on July 9th.

* * *

The National Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of J. Pablo Moneayo, has initiated a series of concerts dedicated to the cause of stimulating musical appreciation among students and workmen, or such people who ordinarily cannot afford the admission prices to symphony concerts. The series will extend through the current month on following dates:

Thursday, June 8th., at the concert hall of the National Conservatory of Music, for students of this institution as well as those of public schools.

Tuesday, June 13th., at the Sears and Roebuck Auditorium, for employees of this institution and their families.

Thursday, June 15th., at the D. M. Nacional, for employees, workmen and their families.

On the 21 st., 23rd., and 30th. of June, at the Sindicato Nacional de Electricistas, for members of the Electrical Workers Union and their families.

On the 22nd. and 29th. of June, at the Union de Sociedades Mutualistas, for employees and students.

Monday, June 26th., at the Club Deportivo Chapultepec, for bank employees.

Tuesday, June 27th., at the Escuela Nacional de Maestros, for students and teachers.

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Art and Personal Notes

OILS, gouaches, drawings and prints by the gifted Mexican painter Amador Lugo are being offered at this time in a one-man show at the Salon de la Plastica Mexicana (Calle de Puebla 154). Having chosen the streets and suburbs of this city as his subject-matter, Lugo presents in his pictures an art which is interpretive as well as documentary. An excellent draftsman, Lugo's compositions are rich in details. He depicts the older streets and plazas with their typical quotidian life, re-creating their peculiar atmosphere as well as the objects.

LA GALERIA de Arte Mexicano (Calle de Milan 18) is presenting during this month an exhibition of paintings in oil by Angelina Beloff. Resident in Mexico throughout many years, this distinguished painter began her studies during her childhood in Russia, and later served her apprenticeship with the French Moderns in Paris. Her personal style, however, which defines a long process of refinement and a striving for perfection, has found an outlet in the social realism of contemporary Mexican painting.

THE Mexican-American Institute of Cultural Relations (Yucatán 63) is currently presenting a group exhibition of works by four painters, three Americans and one Mexican, who are studying art in Mexico on G. I. scholarships. Robert F. Kennedy, Robert M. Ellis, Merle Wachter and Fernando Belain comprise this group.



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E LEVEN figures in terra cotta comprised the recent exhibit of sculpture by Geles Cabrera at the Galeria Arte Moderno (Plaza Santos Degollado 16-C). In all these figures, semi-abstract in structure, a striving for movement provides the salient note.

Following this exhibit, this gallery is presenting a voluminous and varied collective show of paintings, drawings and prints by local artists of solid prestige, which are offered to the public at greatly reduced prices.

A VERY pleasing collection of water colors by Salvador Roncál y Gomez de Palacio were shown last month at the Circulo de Bellas Artes (Av. Juarez 58). At the conclusion of this show this gallery offered an exhibit of paintings, pastel and charcoal drawings by Manuel Salvador Bribiesca. Technically resourceful, this painter unfortunately has a weakness for somewhat trite dramatic themes.

A COLLECTIVE exhibition of works by a group of younger local painters is offered in the course of this month by the Galeria del Centro de Arte Mexicano Contemporaneo (Cuba No. 75).

A PERMANENT exhibition of paintings and prints by the artists who comprise the Taller de Grafica Popular (Netzahualcoyotl No. 9) is open to the public daily from 5 to 9 P.M.

* * *

End of the Oxcart Trail . . .

Continued from page 26

nose up for air. Gradually, like the fade in or out in a movie, the door opened wider. One must leave a temescal gradually. After ten minutes of breathing

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heavenly air, the attendant spread my sheet over me and I crawled through the door. She wrapped me snugly and I collapsed on a mat in the ante-room. Marta crawled out. She had been on the far side, away from the hot wall, and had not suffered as I had. We remained an hour before dressing. Meanwhile, the two month-old babies began to whimper. The midwife handed them through the door into the temescal to perspiring, exhausted mothers who nursed them in the steam room. My two-hour steam bath was a "quickie." The six Zapotecan women remained the entire afternoon lying in the steaming temescal with the door open. Relaxing thus was supposed to be a pleasant part of the ordeal.

Back at the hotel we ate with the appetite of field hands.

Patterns of an Old City . . .

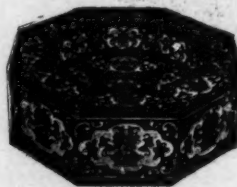
Continued from page 18

But this assurance was soon crowded out by returning doubts. It seemed to him again that he was making irrational conclusions, that he had been led into a maze by his own incensed imagination. Had she ever actually committed herself? Had he, indeed ever fully made up his mind to ask her? And what made him feel so sure that if he ever did she would accept him? Could it not turn out in the end merely a foolish mistake, a novel experience of no consequence?

* * *

It was probably because in his home life he had been eternally surrounded by women that he was extremely shy in his dealings with them on the outside. In his youth he had had a few passing affairs with girls in the neighborhood, but his sisters saw to it that he never became seriously involved. And in his later years his relations with women were confined to occasional stealthy visits to a brothel. Beyond conventional amiability he cultivated no friendships either with the men or the women who worked in his office, and this was as much due to his natural diffidence as to a permanent lack of money which was required for any kind of social amenities.

He had hardly taken note of her during the first few weeks she had worked in the office, and would have probably never noticed her at all had it not been for the little boy who came every afternoon and waited for her near the doorway. Presently the boy's attention was drawn to his desk by a calculating machine, and he approached him somewhat boldly to ask what it was. His mother, he said, worked with a typewriter, but he never saw her use a machine like that. Sanchez explained to the boy the function of the machine, which seemed to puzzle him considerably, then offered the usual questions as to his name, his age and school grade. That was the beginning of their friendship. Each day, while he was winding up his task, the boy paused near his desk to engage him in friendly conversation. Thus, eventually, he found himself talking to his mother as well. It was only the briefest kind of conversation at first, as he accompanied them through the hallways, down the stairs and along the patio to the outer doors, but after a time he gathered the courage to ask them to have an ice cream at a nearby cafe.



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In the subsequent weeks his courage grew further, to an extent that one evening, in a moment of inexplicable rashness, he invited them to a movie. As she sat at his side in the dark he thought it would be nice if he could hold her hand; but he did not venture to try it. Later, he escorted them home in a streetcar, and on the boy's insistence and on her own timid suggestion, awkwardly, followed them up the narrow flights of stairway to the tiny flat on the fourth floor of a shabby tenement building.

She was a very strange woman, he thought, rather homely and yet somehow very attractive. It was pleasant to watch her brew the chocolate over a small tractoline stove and arrange a few cracked plates over the table. Their conversation did not flow readily; they listened mostly to the boy's lively talk, exchanging an occasional remark or laughing at some of the odd things he said. Catching a glimpse of her face at a certain angle, and the strange expression of a wistful mirth as she laughed, he suddenly perceived a subtle charm in her, an indefinable beauty beneath her homeliness.

He thought it was time for him to go when the boy said good night and went into the other room, but he was loath to move. He wanted to tell her that he liked her, that he liked her very much, but instead of that he went on praising the boy, remarking on how intelligent he was, how thoughtful and well-mannered, pointing out that he was almost like a grown-up person, and complimenting her on the fine way she was bringing him up.

She listened with a pensive smile, thanking him for his praise, then of a sudden looked at him gravely, her eyes becoming probingly fixed on his. "I am sure you have been wondering about his father," she said. Whether I am a widow or a divorcee... You are very discreet in not having asked me... And if you had I would have probably told you the usual lie. But I will tell you the truth. I was never married... I had him because I... I made a mistake. At sixteen a girl doesn't know how to defend herself—how to defend herself against her own foolishness... And so I paid for my mistake by keeping him... by losing my home and family. But I learned how to make my way. He taught me how to take care of us both... It's that I didn't want to deceive."

From that night on, at least twice a week, he accompanied her and the boy to the tiny flat, usually leaving promptly at ten o'clock, so as to avoid a scolding or his sisters' suspicious interrogations by arriving home too late. Despite his caution, however, Trini seemed to be aware of a change in his conduct, of his distracted manner, his taciturnity and lacking appetite, and constantly kept on him a watchful eye.

When Sanchez got off the bus he did not walk straight toward his house, but turned aside and strolled around the block. His thoughts were still in confusion and his mind was not made up. Why tell them? he queried himself. Can't I just go ahead and do it without telling them anything—tell them after it's all done? And why am I so sure that I am going



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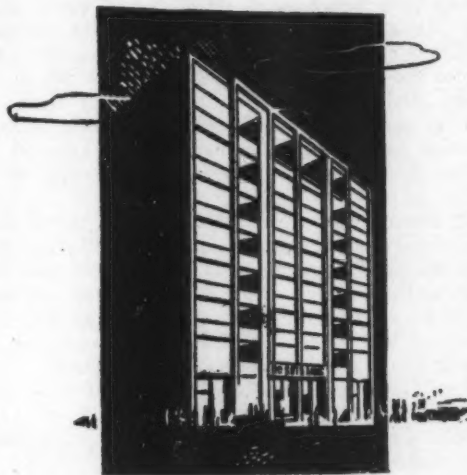
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to do it—that anything is going happen? Did I ask her? Did she say anything? Am I not building something out of sheer supposition?

And then he again recalled sharply, with every minute detail, the episode of the previous night, and his doubts yielded to a renewed assurance. He was saying good night to them at the door of the tenement building when the boy suddenly blurted out: "Señor Sanchez, why don't you marry my mamma and then you won't have to go home every night. You 'll just stay with us all the time." He was startled and deeply embarrassed by these innocent words, but when he saw that she was laughing his embarrassment fled and he began to laugh as well. She didn't say anything, he thought. She only laughed, but it was not merely because she was amused. He was sure that there was a trace of approval in her laughter.

The three sisters were sitting in their usual chairs in the sala, engaged in their usual handiwork, when he came in. He kissed each one on the cheek then took his seat in the corner. "It's a miracle you are home so early to night," Trini said looking at him over the rims of her glasses and without pausing in her manipulation of a pair of large knitting sticks.

"Yes," he said placatorily. "I have been staying out a great deal lately."

"Who knows how you are spending your time," Chucha remarked.

"Yes. Who knows?" added Trini. "Up to something you don't care to talk about. Spending money mysteriously. Making up stories about toothaches and dentists. I hope you are not short this week again... And if you are, don't try that old yarn

about the dentist. I called him up to day and he told me that you paid him weeks ago for the three fillings and that nothing more had to be done."

Now it is beginning, Sanchez thought. Now we 'll be at it. We 'll have it out. "Why, yes," he said, striving to appear calm. "Here it is." He extracted from his pocket a thin wad of bills and handed it to Trini, talking on while she counted. "I, eh... I... You 'll find that it is not complete. I, eh, had to spend part of it... Thirty-six pesos... I, eh..."

Almost immediately the three women were all boisterously talking at once. He sat quietly while the epithets "Selfish pig!" "Spendthrift!" "Shameless rake!" thundered in the room and finally resolved themselves in the insistent queries—"What did you spend it on?" "What did you do with it?" "Who got it away from you?" Then, still making an effort to appear unperturbed, he said: "Very well. If you must know, it was skates. A pair of roller skates."

"Skates?" The three women uttered the word in unison, glowering at him in stark amaze. "You must be going out of your mind," said Trini.

"Yes, skates. A pair of roller skates I gave to a little boy. He is a... eh, friend of mine... He is the boy of a woman that... eh... that..."

"A woman!" Trini's eyes blazed at him fiercely from her large round face. "A woman! That tells it! Some hussy that's making a fool out of you... Some wench you..."

He sprang from his chair shouting, clenching his fists. "Don't you dare! Don't you ever dare to say words like that about her! She is a woman that... that... I... I..." he broke off and ended in a calm voice. "Yes, I will tell you right now. She is the woman I am going to marry."

He bolted out and banging the door shut himself in his room, as he had frequently done when he had a row with his sisters; though as he sat on his bed, his trembling hands clasping his head, he knew that this would be the final row.

* * *

HOLIDAY IN THE CERRADO

Continued from page 22

sheet of handwoven cloth, which I wrapped round me as best I could. Draped in my Roman toga, I followed him back to Lencha's hut.

Ginger soon arrived outfitted in a similar rig. Without further delay we were ushered into a smaller hut and put to bed on a palm-leaf cot. For the first time in over a week we were free from the intolerable

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the intolerable itching that had tormented us both night and day. Almost instantly we dropped off to sleep.

When we awakened the next morning the swelling had gone down, the itching had subsided, and we were laid out beside the cot. For the second time we owed our lives, perhaps, to native care and medication.

The Black Legend...

Continued from page 24

was a surprising concern for the Indians and desire to protect them from oppression by the Spanish officials or the local plutocracies. Many of the provisions of the "Recopilación de Indias" could fittingly be included in modern codes of social justice. In Chile the eight-hour day was law in the sixteenth century, and there was already a paternalistic Price Control Administration.

Of course the legal provisions and the actual practice were not the same. Scoffing at the royal orders that tried to put the brakes on their abuse of the Indians and the people, the Spanish and local authorities coined the phrase, "They are respected, but not observed." Philip II ordered the word "pacification" to be substituted for "conquest." It was a question of Imperial territories, just like those in the Peninsula, and the Indians were just other subjects of His Majesty. We already know how angry Queen Isabella was with Columbus for having dared try to "enslave her native subjects." Recent Latin American students of the matter tell us that even the word "colony" itself was foreign to the system. So they recommend that the expression "The Spanish American Regime" be used in place of "The Colonial Regime" in histories and textbooks.

Father Las Casas certainly was not suffering hallucinations when he wrote that he once saw "four

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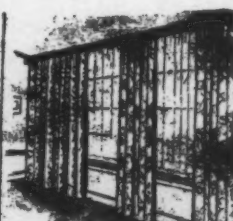
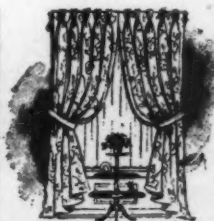
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or five leading Indian gentlemen being burned." And all De Bry did in drawing the horrors and scenes of mutilation was to illustrate Las Casas' text. But the same thing happened at times in other parts of the world during that period and in the European religious wars of that same epoch. Nor were the conquistadors any less cruel in their civil wars in this continent. And the Dutch, English, and French administrations in America had their moments of cruelty.

But it seems there were no coordinated interests aligned to play up and perpetuate black legends about the other regimes. Only Spanish America was the target and victim of organized propaganda. We have seen a similar case in this century—the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion." A certain Paul Krishevan first published them in Russia in his newspaper The Flag in 1903. Translated into all languages, they seethed in the antisemitic press throughout the first third of our century, spreading the idea of a sinister plan for world domination. Finally in 1935 a Swiss court declared the document a crude fake. A Russian secret-police chief named Rachkowski admitted in Paris that the whole thing had been made up by the Czarist secret police. Here were just 30 years of publicity based on a document that was always denounced as a fake, yet we know its effects. In the case of the Black Legend, it started with a genuine publication, the work of a high Spanish Catholic prelate, which, inflated, exaggerated, and deformed by propaganda, prevailed with almost nothing to counterbalance it for three hundred years.

With my fervent belief in Pan Americanism, the thing that most concerns me about this historical episode is the effect of the legend in weakening the bases of mutual respect, esteem, and confidence among the American nations. The subject will doubtless prove of interest to the new historians. One fact is evident, and that is that the corollaries of the legend, if not the legend itself, lasted too long in this country for it to have been an accidental or spontaneous occurrence. So it was easy to forget that for three hundred years the leadership in matters of economics, administration, and culture in the New World was in the Spanish and Portuguese-speaking parts, not in the English-speaking section. And this oversight served the aims of anti-Pan Americanism. For it undermined the U. S. people's confidence in the size of the contribution that the other Americas could make to a policy of hemisphere integration—a policy that would have kept the New World new.



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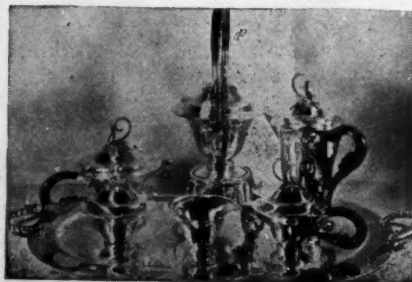
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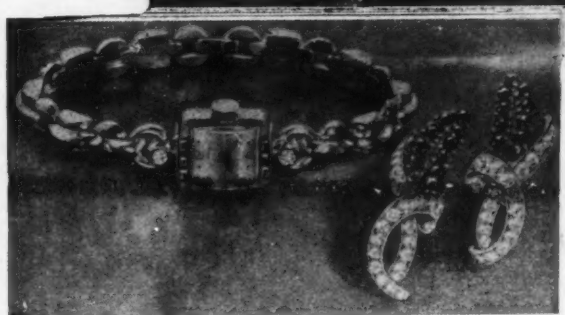
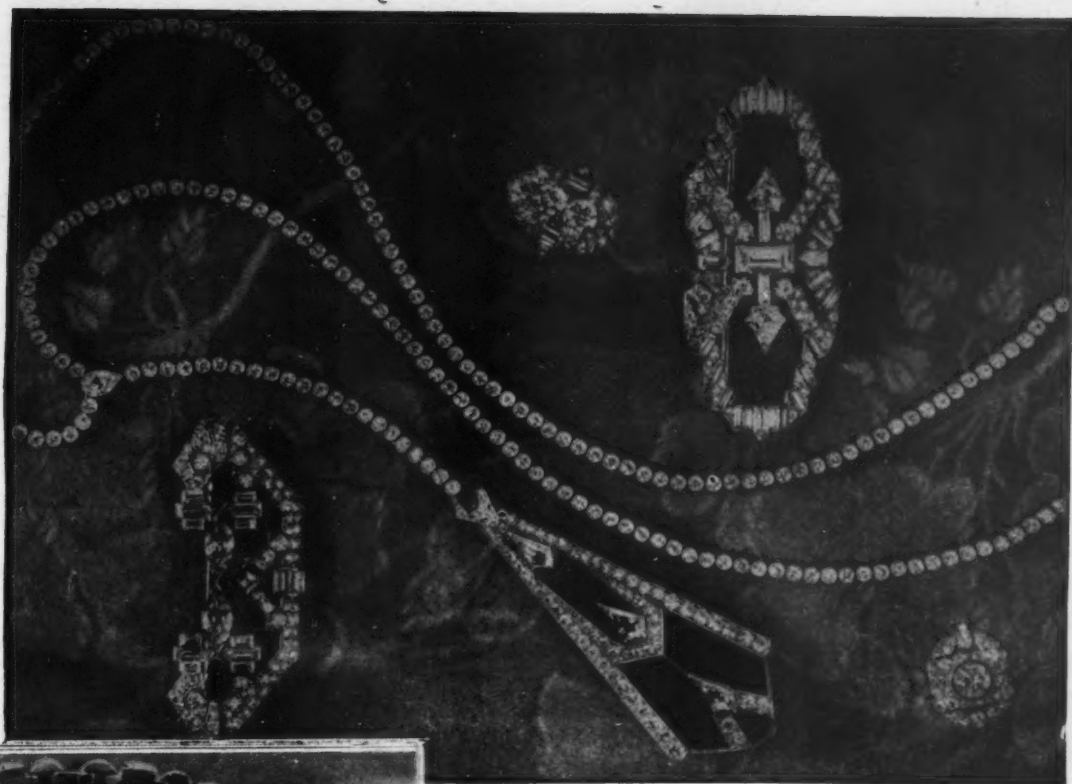
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Pátzcuaro...

Continued from page 15

feel a delicious sense of peace. Looking up, Dr. Hoagland broke the silence by observing, "And what a fine place the middle of this lake might be for writing down the language of the stars."

The three Mexicans, in monosyllabic conference, made a new decision, and we turned again toward the mainland to follow the shore. Occasionally we passed fishermen's huts, with great seines spread out to dry and looking like gigantic silver spider webs spun over the dark-gray rocks. We plowed through a congregation of slender aquatic plants that resembled the ghostly Indian pipes of Maine, but they might have been translucent periscopes from a thousand Lilliputian submarines hiding in the coves. One lone fisherman was fishing from a canoe, dug out at some former time with infinite patience from a massive log. "Evidently, unexpected guests for Sunday dinner have turned up," Señor Sánchez said, "and he must piece out the meal."

We rounded a rocky peninsula that looked like a group of seals piled on each other to sun themselves. We drew up in a cove, and disembarked at a little settlement with a population of seventeen souls. Despite his limp, Manuel Solís led the way up a zigzag path between rock walls and organ cacti. As we climbed we became aware that we were accompanied by a silent reception committee of three diminutive female figures in long dresses that reached to the ground. They looked like an unfamiliar race of pygmies, but though they were pot-bellied, they were rather pretty, with plump cheeks and orange-brown complexions. The girls were in stairstep ages, and they held up the front of their bright cotton skirts like ladies as they scrambled up the path.

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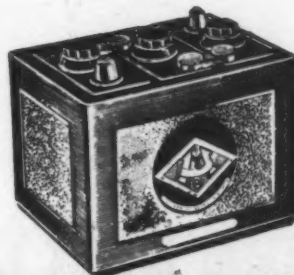
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At the top of the hill stood a little stone church, ancient and dilapidated, where services were held three or four times a year. Through frames of fantastic slabs of cactus, joined together like linked crabs and forming an auxiliary fence about the diminutive churchyard, we could catch vistas of the lake. From the height of this cacti-studded balcony, the water was more mauve than aquamarine, and it seemed to be lighted from within its own depths rather than from the high sun above.

When I turned from one framed view to another, I noticed Preciliano seated in meditation on the jagged rock wall, with thrusting arms of cacti making a kind of arch above him. "Wait," I said, and got out my Leica. If I had been taking time exposures instead of snapshots, I believe he could have sat motionless for an hour. He was a perfect model. He posed with his hat on, with it off, looking down, looking up. Whichever way he sat or looked, whether grave or half-smiling, there were evidenced those deeply ingrained qualities of dignity and inherent melancholy. His features and his figure mutely invited not a photographer, but a sculptor who fashioned men out of marble or bronze.

Preciliano was pure Indian, full-blooded Tarascan. These Tarascans traced their historical inheritance back to eighteen kings who had ruled before Calzontzin. Long before the Spaniards came they had been a sedentary people who planted and fished. The repose and strength and philosophy of his tribal ancestors were there in the brow and the mouth and the jaw of the boy, but more especially in the imponderable spirit that emanated from him.

Preciliano had never left his native state. He had been no farther from Pátzcuaro than Morelia. His



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education had been only primary, and that most sketchy. Did he have ambition? It was hard to judge. Would he always be a boatman? Well, if he ended his days here on the shores of this lake, knowing the world only from a single window, there were ten thousand worse fates that might befall a man. Here life was rooted and concentrated. Living was as cheap as it was simple. Corn and fruits grew plentifully, and the lake, like the widow's cruse, held an abundance of fine-flavored fish. By night or day there was beauty to be had for the trouble of remarking it. Instead of going out into the hot struggles of the world's affairs, one could stay here cool and serene, and let odds and ends of the world come to Pátzcuaro.

I turned from the Indian to take some snaps of Manuel Solís. With him, it was not the same. He did not so completely belong to the lake region. When he grew up, he could, if he chose, find a welcoming niche in Mexico City. If chance should set him in New York or Paris or Buenos Aires, he might feel quite at home in no time. But all the stuff that blew together to make the Tarascan Preciliano came out of this clear water, these abiding rocks, this fertile soil, these mountain trees, and the drifting dust of extinct volcanoes aeons old.

At a cry of delight from Manuel Solís, I looked up to see a white heron pass over the little church tower and become for one instant a living weathervane against the sky's blue. Then as we started to return to the boat, the little girls, who had remained like mute supernumeraries in a play, shyly presented Thérèse with wild flowers they had plucked from among the rocks. Gathering up their ground-length skirts, they swiftly picked their way down the rough path in front of us, as if to herald our approach.

When the children turned at a side path to the right, we followed. There through the trees and thick shrubs was an open space before a hut. Some women,



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dressed in precisely the same style as the little girls, were boiling a savory mess in a pot. Drying fish nets spread on the bushes looked like snares with cowering greenish animals caught and awaiting the cooking. The women were as plump and well nourished as the children, and not at all unfriendly at our intrusion. When we gave the little girls coins for candies, Manuel Solís tried to make them say, "Thank you very much," in English. But they only clamped their lips together and made a giggling sound. I said, "De nada," very politely, and Manuel Solís was pleased. At Preciliano's request, the women began to demonstrate the intricate process of rigging up a mariposa net. Suddenly beyond me to the lake, Manuel shouted gleefully, "Mariposa! Mariposa!"

Around a bend came a dugout canoe with gauzy white wings extending some eight or nine feet on either side of the edges. But the wings were not sails to catch the wind, they were nets to catch fish. The outfit in motion looked like some incredible and marvelous new creature akin to the moth family. These butterfly nets are peculiar to Lake Pátzcuaro, and one of its most picturesque features. But they are rapidly falling into disuse as more modern methods of fishing are being adopted. The nets are sewed onto bent pliable, bamboolike frames, which are gathered in at the middle, something like an inflated pair of water wings, and curved upward in a graceful concave. As the net is dipped first to left and then to right, the fish are scooped up in the shallow bowls.

We watched the dugout with the spread butterfly wings glide by like a dream boat, all grace and glittering transparency, making music of motion. With what poetic tools could a man ply a mundane trade if art was rooted in his being! Though I had never heard of mariposa nets being used in China and Japan, they were just the sort of thing to adorn an idealized Oriental landscape.

As we crossed the lake headed for the Island of Janitzio, hovering clouds dropped purplish shadow like rugs on the smooth parquet. Except for one lone little boat with a man and a woman rowing arduously, we again had the lake for a private pleasure ground. The couple's craft was piled so high with chairs, petates, utensils that it looked as if they were moving all their household goods. Preciliano said they must be moving, and Manuel Solís added the word "Indubitabilmente."

"What long words children use in Mexico!" I said to Señor Sánchez. "No American boy of eleven would use 'indubitably,' and in Spanish it is even longer."

"Yes, señor. Mexican children seem to take to big words quite naturally. My own kids often sur-

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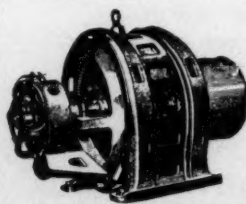
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prise me. Only the other evening in Chapultepec Park one of my little girls got lost and when we found her she said—in Spanish, of course—'Papa, I was completely disorientated!'"

We nodded and smiled at the couple who were taking their goods from one island to another. They smiled back and pulled even more vigorously at the oars. Their faces were strained and wet with the sweat of exertion.

"Aren't you grateful for the outboard motor, Preciliano?" I said.

He raised his eyes and smiled a slow smile. "It is a gift direct from Heaven, señor."

The Life of Bobby Ortiz Riley

Continued from page 12

kajou on a chain, a creature the size of a cat with closely curled, tawny fur, big eyes in a small head, paws like little hands with long black nails, and a tail like a monkey's. She would climb all over you in search of food, nibbling, nibbling everywhere but never biting. She took the piece of banana Fernando gave her, lay back on Bobby's hand with her paws in the air and her tail around Bobby's arm, and held the banana to her mouth like a baby with its bottle.

Fernando suddenly picked Bobby up and plumped him into the barber chair. Bobby wriggled in delight when the white bib was tied around his neck. Mother and Lupita had sheared the excess off his abundant hair, but he never had a barber haircut before.

"This is Domingo Ortiz's son," Fernando said to the two friends with their chairs tilted against the wall. His gold teeth flashed. "Domingo is my very good friend."

Bobby held himself stiff. The clippers made his scalp tingle. The falling hair tickled. The lather around the edge of his hair tickled too, but in a cool, smooth way. Finally Fernando rubbed a handful of fragrant oil into his hair and combed it back, making a fetching flare over the forehead. The reflection in the mirror made Bobby feel almost shy.

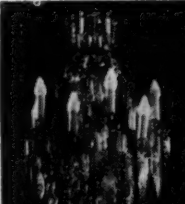


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"And now a shave," said Fernando. He dabbed a little lather on Bobby's chin, shaved it off, and rubbed in some cream. The four of them doubled with laughter and snapped their fingers repeatedly. When the merriment died down, Bobby politely passed around his lozenges. He danced and skipped all the way home.

Tossing his pants in the front door, he lay down in the soft dust of the road. Mother would screech if she knew. He rolled all the way over and turned towards the sun. Papacito would not be home for an hour yet.

Papacito was handsome, easily the handsomest man in town. No thickness coarsened his lips, nose and ears. He had no gold teeth like Fernando's, but they were beautiful anyhow, shining white and even; he brushed them morning and night with a vigor audible in the adjoining houses. His lean body had none of the unsightly bulges of other papas. He went barefoot often now that Mother was gone, but his feet were slender and well arched, not spraddled and distorted like many men's. His skin was as smooth and brown as the rocks under the water from his thick black hair to his carefully trimmed toenails. Except when he was working, he was immaculate in creased trousers and a freshly laundered American shirt. Every other day he went to the barber's and came away looking like a page from a glossy magazine and smelling like the priest's garden.

Papacito was witty. His quick retorts were apt, and his stories made his friends snap their fingers and shake with mirth. The occasional Americans who flew in, enormous men with raw faces and beautiful shirts, laughed even louder. No one else could speak such fluent English. Drinking only sharpened his wit.

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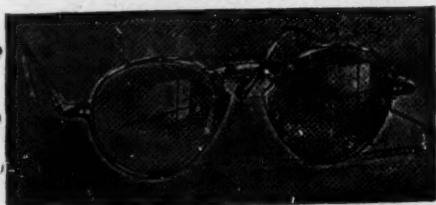
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He never brawled or slept in the street like Pepe Bravo's papa, who sometimes couldn't provide his family with frijoles to go with their tortillas. Pepe, with his thin legs and swollen belly, was a poor creature who couldn't stand up two minutes in a fight.

Papacito always had money. Everybody in town worked, even little boys and morons, who carried from the river two buckets for 25 centavos; but most people worked only a little. Farming tapered off after the summer rains. Cocoanuts were harvested in a few weeks in June and December. But Papacito always kept busy—wood, fish from the nearby ocean, sesame, and pará, which grew the year round, for the burros and cattle. Men came to borrow money in the off season. He smiled and joked, but his eyes took on a glint like the American's when he talked of an understanding.

Often he had gone to the United States to make more money. Only two years before, he spent four months picking cotton in a place called Arkansas and returned with a Stetson and saddle shoes, a suitcase full of presents, and six hundred dollars, which looked something like pesos but could buy things as full of surprise as Mother's tales of fairies and leprechauns. While Bobby sampled his sweets and mechanical toys, Mother pressed lustrous fabrics to her cheek.

"That's God's country up there!" she said. "That and Ireland!" She held up a fragile pink piece with lace trim and sighed happily. "I'm going to wear this down to the river. Hotcha, hotcha! When that gets wet, I'll be the town panic!"

Domingo took it from her with a laugh and laid it down.

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"Your hands, Domingo!" she exclaimed suddenly. "Your beautiful hands! What have you done to them?"

"Cotton picking does that. It's nothing."

She pressed them to her lips, placed his arms around her, took him in a strong embrace, and kissed him. "My darling! Four months of that grind! And four months away from me!" She kissed him again.

Domingo met Rosie Riley in Acapulco, where she had come from Panama on a tramp steamer, and, after a week's intense courtship, married her before the priest and brought her to his village. Roberto was born within the year. She called him "Bobby" from the start, and "Bobby" he became to the whole town.

She was a tall woman, amply curved, with blue eyes, skin like duck's down, and cheeks like hibiscus. Her hair was pure yellow. Sometimes, while Bobby watched wonderingly, she parted it, dipped a toothbrush in some liquid, and applied it to the roots. "Giving Nature a slight assist," she explained to him. Whenever she put on a fresh dress and walked out with the golden sunlight pouring on her golden hair, she drew more people to the streets than had anything in the town's history except the earthquake that flattened the church.

She amplified Papacito's stories of America and told of a wondrous green land peopled by tall heroes and wee folk with strange powers and a stranger sense of humor. Then again she shrieked at him or started loud altercations with Papacito in which she always had the last word.

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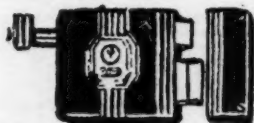
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She tried at first to make Bobby wear clothes but soon decided five or six changes a day was too much to wash and admitted defeat by the dust. The townspeople's interest and her husband's adoration made her feel a queen, but she made few friends. She could not acquire fluency in the language. Her references to "them Mexicans," or sometimes "these greasers," pushed the whole world away from her and left her proud on a little island.

One night she came home in an automobile with a big, flashy, dark man and started putting her clothes in a suitcase. She did not look at Bobby but the stranger sometimes glanced at him. He spoke only once. "Hurry," he said. "He may come home."

"I'll handle him if he does," she answered grimly.

Papacito did come home. He suddenly appeared in the doorway with a knife in his hand. "So it's true!" he said.

"Drop that knife!" she screamed. She ran up to him and thrust forward her breast. "You touch me! I dare you to touch me!" She called him terrible names. He blazed at her, but she towered over him and yelled him down. Bobby cowered in a corner. Once he had seen a man in the plaza stab another three times, and he had heard many stories of violence. But Papacito finally threw the knife on the floor, pressed his hands to his ears, and sat down by the window. Mother continued to scream at him until she finished packing and gave her suitcase to the stranger.

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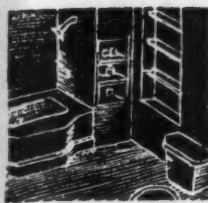
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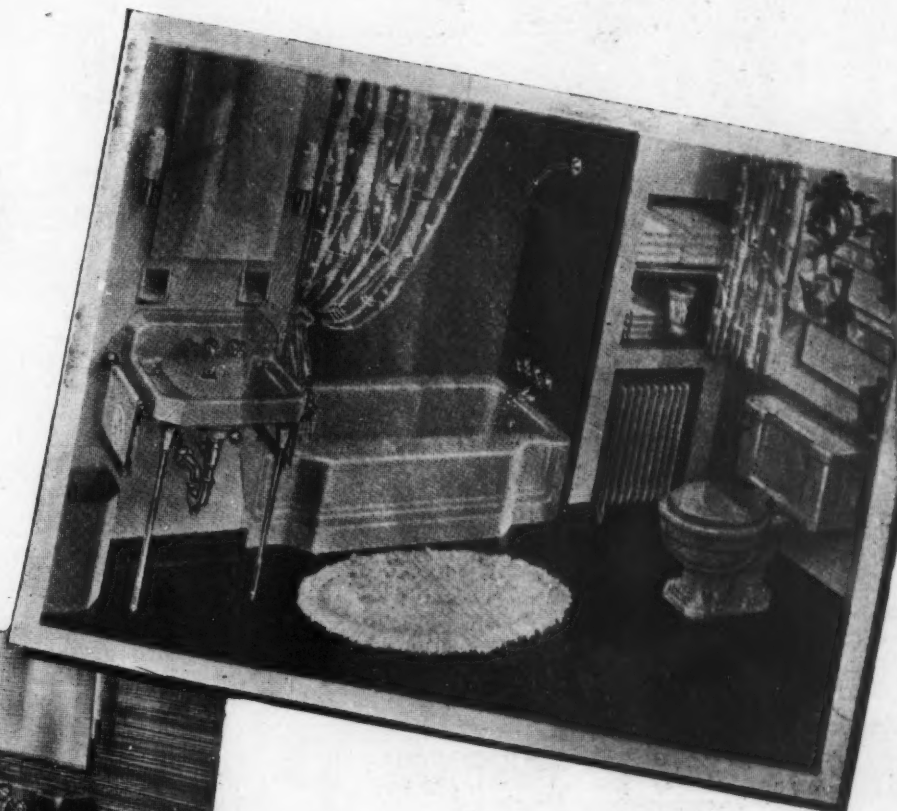
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When the sound of the motor had died away, Papacito went to the door and looked into the darkness. "A woman of spirit," he said. "Much spirit."

Bobby went to bed in the back room. He listened until Papacito put out the light. Whenever he fell asleep, it was to wake from dreams of blood and violence. He could always hear Papacito moving in his bed. Once he was awakened by his own screams. "Bobby?" said his father's voice. Bobby ran into the next room and climbed into his father's bed. With his head on Papacito's shoulder and Papacito's arm tight around him, he slept until dawn.

Lupita moved in a few days later, a short, softly curved, softly spoken girl, very dark. Occasionally she shrieked at him too, but she never quarreled with Papacito.

These memories disturbed him when they came in the night, but now, in the sun, they seemed no more frightening than tales of fairies and leprechauns.

At the call of dinner, he shook off the dust and ran to the table. He suddenly realized what Mother would say, but, looking slyly at Lupita, he knew she would not notice.

"Bobby, wash your hands!" This was Papacito. He ran obediently to the back yard and dipped his hands in the wash basin. "Soap! Neck! Ears!" Mother might as well be here. Bobby lathered himself, rinsed, dried, and ran back to the table. "Who cut your hair? Alfonso?" Nothing escaped Papacito. "I'll kick him in the pants, that Alfonso!"

Rice soup, beef fried with onions and peppers, fried squash, frijoles refried with plenty of lard, candied squash. Mother's roast-and-vegetable meals used to set more lightly, but Lupita's cooking was good. Bobby pointed to the American gas stove beside the charcoal stove where Lupita did her frying. "Why don't you bake pies and cakes?" he asked.

"That thing might explode," replied Lupita. "Besides, they're not good for the stomach."

Bobby swung in the hammock suspended from the front room rafters until Elvira Perez went by on



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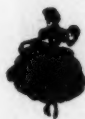
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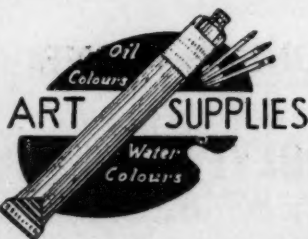
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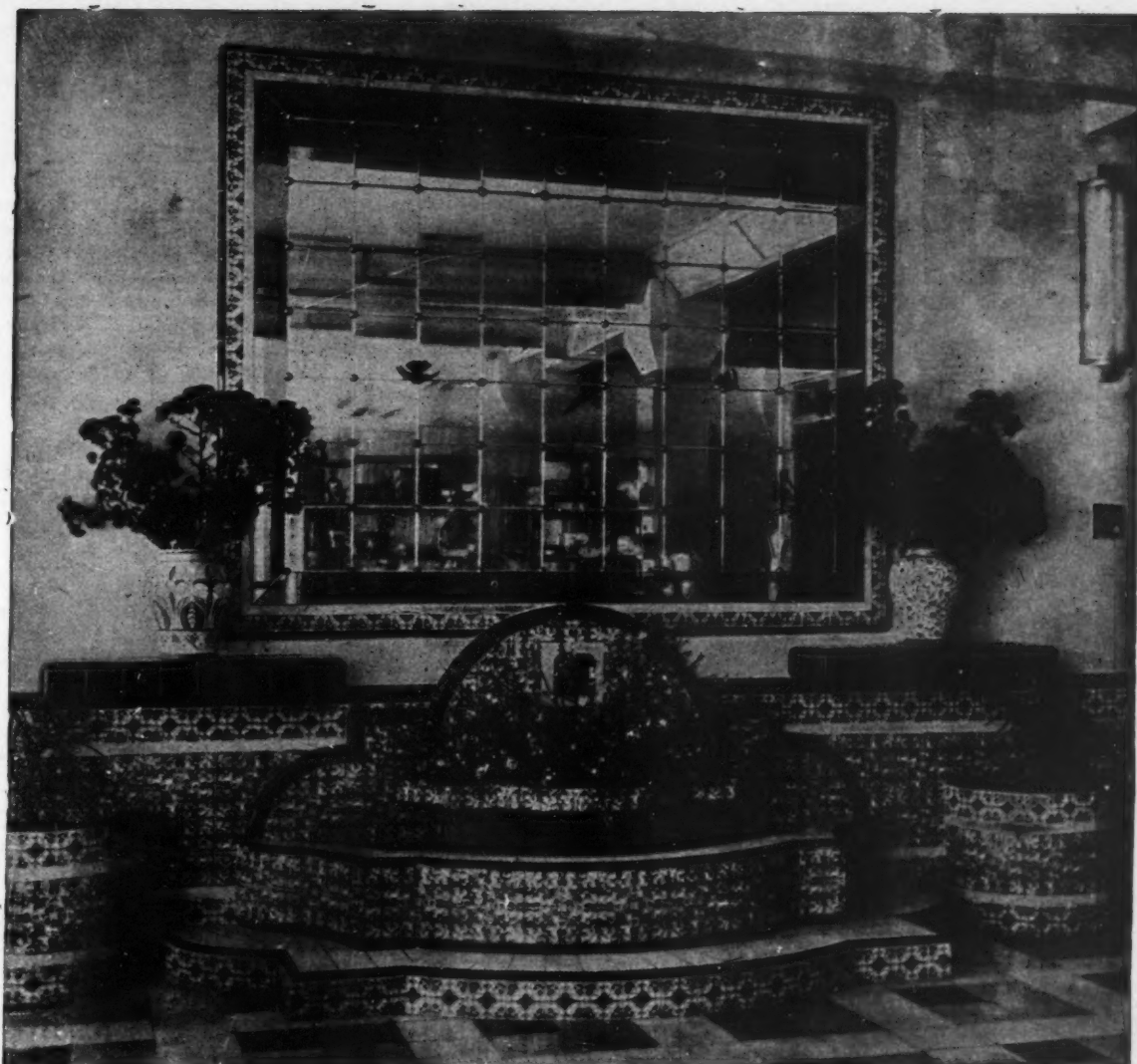
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her way to the cantina where she drank with the men. She was no longer homely now that she wore pretty dresses and knowing coiffures. She always wore shoes, even in the house. This love business must have something to it—the girls and the men in the cantinas, Papacito and Lupita, Papacito and Mother, Mother and the man who came while Papacito was a bracero, El Capitan and his hens, the newly-weds... He looked thoughtfully at Cruzita Perez playing alone with her dolls. He walked over.

"Give me a kiss, Cruzita," he said.

"Why?"

"It would be nice," he argued.

"I don't think so."

She struggled, but he applied his lips to her cool cheek with a loud smack and ran laughing down the street. It didn't shed any light on the mystery, but it was something to boast about.

He soon fell in with Luis, his half-brother. Luis was Papacito's son, too, but his mother had married Dionisio Guerrero, the storekeeper, while Papacito was in the United States. Because of Luis he was tolerated by the older boys who played beisbol. The games took place on a sandy waste in a curve of the river where a breeze swept in from the ocean. He ran after the balls that fell in right field and swung desperately at the ball when it was his turn, sometimes hitting it.

When the boys finished, some of them wanted to go to the lumber yard where the young boxers came to train for the Sunday bouts when they finished their day's work. But Bobby saw two friends climbing into Papacito's jeep, and all had towels over their shoulders. He ran and took his place on the floor beside the driver's seat. When they stopped at the edge of town, he dashed between the houses and down the steep river bank, jerked off his pants, and flung himself headlong into the water, which was three meters deep at this narrow point in the river. He swam with a great flailing of limbs but little locomotion.



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The three men placed their clothes in neat piles on the rocks and waded in, reluctant to break the conversation.

Two boys took turns diving from a sawed-off limb on an ashtree that grew out of the bank, their bent legs forming a crooked V. After a time, Papacito climbed up there. For a moment he stood poised, looking as tall as an American and far more beautiful. Then he described a perfect arc through the air, his feet together, and entered the water with hardly a splash. Everybody let out a long whistle. Bobby suddenly went into an ecstasy of splashing.

The men towed themselves and sat on rocks to resume their conversation. Above and below them, women still washed their clothes. Where the river disappeared, the sun threw out streamers of scarlet and orange tipped with gold. A few people moved about in the group of houses on the opposite bank. A single white heron hunted in the shallows. Birds chattered ceaselessly. Bobby's chest suddenly contracted with a sweet agony. He slipped his hand into Papacito's, who returned an understanding pressure without interrupting his conversation.

The talk was of impressive grownup affairs—copra, sesame, horses, mahogany, fishing, politics. Garment by garment the men reluctantly dressed. When they drove back to town, the color had gone out of the sky and lights were coming on in the reed and adobe houses. The women had sprinkled water on the dust in the streets. People chatted in the doorways. When the jeep had been driven in beside the house, Papacito said:

"Do you want to go to the zócalo tonight?"

"Lupita! Lupita!" cried Bobby, running into the house. "My shirt! We're going to the zócalo!"

He put it on without buttoning it and took his father's hand. The three blocks to the zócalo subjected them to a continuous barrage of badinage, man to man and boy to boy.

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The zócalo was two blocks square. Geometric gardens converged on an ornate bandstand. Enormous tamarinds shaded the wide bordering walk. Bobby picked up the pods that fell from them and gnawed the thin covering of tart fruit from the large seeds. Already dozens of people were walking around and around the square, chattering and laughing. The business buildings were almost hidden behind the reed and timber structures that crowded the walk. Elvira Perez was drinking at a table with three men in one of the cantinas at the west end. Men played dominos at the tables in the soft drink and sweet stands on the north and south sides. Three rows of ten tables each paralleled the east walk. The cantinas and stands had electricity but these tables used kerosene flares.

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A charcoal brazier glowed red beside each table, a woman sat behind it, and a bench waited for customers in front of it.

Choosing was always difficult. Bobby settled for three tacos, meat rolled in tortillas and fried, and two tostados, tortillas fried crisp and piled with shredded lettuce and meat and thinly sliced radishes and onions, all seasoned with chili. The woman sent a boy for two iced bottles of red soda.

They were half way on their second lap of the zócalo when five shots rang out behind the cantinas. Bobby's chest contracted, but his fear was not enough to drown his curiosity. He grabbed his father's hand and ran with the yelling crowd. This time it was only a drunken countryman giving expression to a surge of emotion. He galloped off when he saw a policeman, but the policeman commandeered a jeep, caught him, and took him, cowed, to the jail.

This was good for a half hour's conversation. Finally, Bobby and his father stopped promenading to rest on a bench. Some boys sang softly to guitar accompaniment at the tables across the walk.

"How would you like to start to school next week?" asked Domingo unexpectedly.

Bobby had idled by the school sometimes and what went on inside seemed infantile. His life was pleasant as it was.

"What do you want to be when you grow up?"

Bobby brightened. "I'd like to make adobe bricks like Tono. I know how. You wet the adobe and put it in molds and then smooth it and pat it like this. Then when it dries in the sun you put the bricks in the kiln, which is ever so hot. You burn cocoanut husks under it."

"And you play in the mud all day. Wonderful!"

"Or a tailor like Liberto." Liberto kept his sewing machine on the front porch all day where he

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could enjoy the breeze and dominate the neighborhood persiflage. "He can make a pair of pants faster than anybody—two hours. I could do that, with a little practise. Or Lauro Sambrano says I can be his partner. I know his business, too. When the goat skins dry, you put them in the lime vat first. Then when the hair is off, you put them in the guamuchil bark vat for the uppers and in cascalote for sole leather."

"You know a lot, don't you!" commented Domingo. "But none of these things require any education. You could be a technician, or a lawyer, or a doctor."

"Like Dr. Ulloa?" Dr. Ulloa went about all day with a small black bag and a large air of importance and had a shiny car.

"I'd like you to cure sick people. Your grandfather and grandmother died of tuberculosis. They went to a witch doctor. I'd feel very proud if my son were fighting disease and ignorance. Your grandparents couldn't read nor write. They wouldn't let me go to school because they regarded it as foolish. I had to learn to read and write myself. Later I went to night school in the United States. When you finish school here, you can go to my sister in Mexico City and finish school and college. Then maybe we can get you a scholarship in the United States. From now on you and I will always talk English so you can keep in practice."

Stunning vistas! And he and Papacito would always have their own secret language. But his enthusiasm suddenly dimmed. Will you be with me?" he asked.

"Always in vacation time. Sometimes at other times. I talked with the school teacher today, and he said you would soon catch up with the others. I will pay him for extra tutoring."

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and close them up again. Tomorrow he would ask Dr. Ulloa to show him how it is done. He suddenly ran across the walk and back, and hugged his father's arm. Domingo pressed his arms tight to his side.

"What do you say to a coke?" he said in English.

Bobby threw back his head and laughed. "Swell!" he answered.

His head was buzzing when he went to bed, but he was drowsy from tiredness. Two days more would be Sunday, which was a day of real excitement. Church and cock fights in the morning. Animated buying and selling in the market. Groups of rancheros and their full-skirted women coming to town on horseback, the horses' hoofs splashing the water and clicking against the stones as they forded the river. Boxing in the afternoon, and sometimes a jaripeo, with Papacito and his dun horse competing in stunts with the other men. The cinema at night and absolutely everybody in the zócalo.

He pushed aside a feeling of guilt. If his English slipped entirely away from him, he could never forget those words, "Bobby, have you washed your feet?" Only once had he dared to answer, "Yes, Mother." She had boxed his ears and screamed, "Don't you ever lie to me again! Ever!" But Lupita never noticed.

Mother. A strange word for a strange, foreign sort of woman. A very grand woman riding about somewhere in a powerful car with a great dark man. A tall, golden woman... Bobby, have you washed your feet? Si, Mother, si-i-i... Si...

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